PICTURES OF INDIAN LIFE

By

SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE

WITH

A LIFE SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

FOREWORD BY

Dr. Sir. RASH BEHARY GHOSE

K.T. C.S.I. C.I.E., D.L., etc ,

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This is a collection of the Life and select writings of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose the founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*. The biography of Shishir Kumar should itself prove a mine of Indian political information and contains a full account of the Indian Administration and the reforms introduced by Lords Northbrook, Lytton, Ripon, Dufferin and others; and when one such comes to be written the world will see how this great man was able to influence all these high officials and thereby contributed his share to the building of the Indian Nation. The essays and anecdotes included in this volume are written on every conceivable subject and his political writings are so exhaustive and of such perennial interest that they are always a source of inspiration and guidance. A peculiar vein of humour and originality runs through his writings and combined with freshness and vigour they are of enduring value. *Mr. W. S. Caine*, that great friend of India, says "*I heartily commend to every cultured and earnest Indian, to every Christian Missionary and also to every European who cares to look beneath the*

surface of Indian life and thought the articles from the pen of Shishir Kumar Ghose which will be rendered doubly interesting by the careful perusal."

These articles originally appeared in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* before the year 1898. In view of the permanent value of these literary gems and as a token of the Publishers' reverential admiration and tribute, this volume is presented to the public so that the rising generation may reap the benefit of them. In conclusion the Publishers are highly indebted to the Proprietors of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* for having allowed them to present the book in this form.

FOREWORD

The author of these *Pictures of Indian Life* Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose was in many ways a most distinguished man—distinguished by qualities of mind and still more distinguished by qualities of soul. The story of the founding of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and the brilliant success it achieved under his editorship need not be repeated for it has passed into history. I will only say that no Indian newspaper was more eagerly read by the public or more disliked in official circles than the *Patrika*. Its articles were always full of humour and sparkled with wit.

A fearless champion of the rights of his countrymen Babu Shishir Kumar engaged himself in the establishment of the Indian League—a body which in its time did very useful work and paved the way for the present National movement. Politics however did not absorb all his energies. To borrow Disraeli's words, he affected the mind of his generation not in one way but in various directions. He was a man of intense spiritual fervour and his religious works which have enjoyed a wide circulation, show him perhaps at his best. Of Babu Shishir Kumar it may be truly

said that he broke no promise, served no private end, gained no title and lost no friends.

The writings of such a man deserve to be made known all over India and I commend the following pages to my countrymen in the confident hope that they will derive both profit and pleasure from them.

CALCUTTA,
17-12-17.

RASH BEHARY GHOSE

SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE.

Ah, when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule, and universal peace
Lie like a lane of beams athwart the sea,
Thro' all the circle of the golden year?

Tennyson.

To write a history of the life of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose within the small compass of a few pages is simply like playing with an edged tool. This great man's life was so eventful and pregnant with so many activities for the good of his race and of mankind that it is not possible for us to give our readers more than a mere glimpse into his career. Several characteristic features governed his whole earthly career. They were world patriotism, complete self-effacement, unquenchable thirst for the love of God and firm conviction in the eternity of man's life. Two men were born in the early days of the present century that bore a peculiar resemblance to each other,—Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose of Bengal and Mr. William T. Stead of England. Both were princes of journalists, both were great philanthropists, and both high thinkers and noble spiritualists of the age.

SHISHIR KUMAR GHOSE

Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose was born in the year 1842 in the village of Magura (now Amrita-bazar), in the district of Jessore. He was the third of the eight sons of Babu Harinarayan Ghose, the leader of the local Bar. Shishir Babu's eldest brother was Basanta Kumar, who was a precocious youth and latterly, an absorbent philosopher and strong moralist from whom the former derived no small inspiration. Shishir Babu was a genius a ready and original wit, a splendid debater and a man of towering intellect. He attained to a position, which was and still is an object of envy to most of his countrymen. Mr. W. S. Caine M. P., a devoted friend of India, wrote in 1897 in his short sketch of Mr. Ghose's life:—

"In his youth, Shishir Kumar Ghose had few of the advantages now possessed by young Indians. His education was local and elementary; and he owes entirely to himself and his extra-ordinary energy of character, all the intellectual culture he possesses. One of his own favourite sayings is, "time is the best gift of God to man", and he has always lived up to this principle. From his earliest youth, he has utilised every spare moment, which he has seized in passing to press into his own service, for the improvement of his mind, or to add to that marvellous store of know-ledge concerning India and her people, which is the wonder of his friends".

After receiving the rudiments of education at the village school, Shishir Kumar came to Calcutta. Here he was admitted to the Hare School and passed his Entrance examination with great credit standing fourth in the general list and obtained a scholarship.

The early days of Shishir Kumar were spent in the development of physical power. While yet a boy, he proved himself an expert in climbing trees, in riding, running, fencing, swimming and gymnastic exercises. Here is a story illustrating his great energy and wonderful physical power. In his native village there was a reservoir, called "Bhola-pukur"—a large sheet of water, which few, if any, villagers would venture to swim across. Shishir was asked to do this, and he did it more than creditably. Indeed, he swam across the tank about fifty times and for some three hours' running, to the great pleasure and admiration of his friends and obtained a prize from the Magistrate of the district.

At a very tender age, too, Shishir Kumar cultivated the art of music. He was not only successful in his efforts but published a book called "Sangit Shastra". Latterly, he brought his knowledge to perfection and became an excellent musician, both vocal and instrumental.

At the time when Shishir was a boy, Brahmoism was making serious inroads upon

Hinduism in Bengal. As a man of an intensely religious turn of mind, he at once adopted that religion, while still a youth. But in the latter part of his life, his views underwent a change and he became the shining light—the life and soul—of Baishnavism. He was a man of strong principles; and in the teeth of great opposition and despite all threats of excommunication, he gave his sister in marriage to a gentleman belonging to a different sect of Kayasthas. So, it was he who took the first step to combat the present-day social evils. Subsequently, he became an ardent votary of spiritualism and a sincere admirer and follower of "Sri Gauranga",—the Prophet of Nadia. Everyone in Bengal is well aware that it was Shishir Kumar who turned the tide of popular belief in favour of the noble teachings of this the latest Prophet and re-established the claims of "Bhakti-yoga."

From his very boyhood Shishir Kumar was a lover of humanity. In conjunction with his brothers he inaugurated an association called "Bhratri-Samaj," the chief aim of which was to raise subscriptions to defray the expenses of a dispensary and hospital, which they had established in their native village. Indeed, his idea was to make his village a model one in every respect, to cultivate self-help, co-operation and brotherhood amongst the villagers. And in loving

memory of his mother, he changed the name of his village to Amrita Bazar after the name of his mother "Amritamoyee." With indefatigable efforts, the brothers headed by Shishir Kumar also founded some Brahmo churches, girls schools, night schools for cultivators, as also a high English school and a post office. So greatly imbued were the brothers with humanitarian principles that careless of catching the contagion during epidemics of cholera, they would, under his leadership, go about in the village with supplies of medicines and thus greatly help—in lowering the rate of mortality. For all this, Babu Shishir Kumar was highly eulogised in several official reports of Mr. James Munro, the then Collector of Jessore, who was a great friend of Shishir Kumar and often visited the village to watch its onward progress. Indeed, so struck was Mr. Munro by the growing importance of the village, that he at one time agreed with Babu Shishir Kumar, when requested by him to remove the headquarters of the district to that village.

The journalistic career of Shishir Babu commenced in the small village of Magura. He was scarcely eighteen years old when he contributed a series of articles to the "Hindu Patriot" protesting against the oppression of ryots by the all-powerful indigo planters. These letters created great sensation among the local authorities. Mr. Molony, the

District Magistrate of Jessore, threatened to prosecute him if he did not cease writing. But he continued his mission undauntedly, and so great was his desire for serving his motherland, that at last, he was able to liberate the helpless ryots from the hands of the despotic planters. Some of these articles of Babu Shishir Kumar found their way into the Indigo Commission's report, and they display his remarkable sagacity, strong commonsense, power of expression and clear, scathing style and mastery over the English language even in those days when he was a mere stripling.

The names of Messrs. Munro and O'Kinealy are very intimately connected with the life of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose. It was at their instance and under them that Shishir Babu served for a time as a Deputy Collector. At this time he was able to introduce many valuable reforms in his own native district. But a man of strong independence, he did not long find Government service to his liking. So he gave up his appointment and started a newspaper, the "Amrita Bazar Patrika", after the name of his village. The initial difficulties which Shishir Babu had to contend with in order to make his paper a success are too well-known to bear repetition here. However, if his village had so long its dispensary, post office, various schools and associations and a fully equipped market, it now had the proud distinc-

tion of having a printing press and a newspaper, a glorious position for a Bengal village in the interior in those days, unconnected by railways, and which even many towns at the time could not boast of.

It has now grown into a household story in this part of the country, and everyone knows that the "Patrika" was first started with only a wooden printing press without a compositor or even a pressman, and that Shishir Babu had to do everything singlehanded as did Bennett in the early days of the "New York Herald". But still during the government of Lord Lytton and Sir Ashley Eden when the Vernacular Press Act was passed,—and it is an open secret now that the slowgrinding legislative machinery was thus moved to stifle this paper to death in infancy,—Shishir Kumar converted it within a single night from a hebdomadal to an English weekly to the mortification of his enemies, to his own safety, and to the admiration of both the people and the Government. The birth of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" marks an epoch in the journalistic life of India. The "Patrika" may not be the oldest paper in this country, but it is undoubtedly, so far as Indian politics is concerned, the oldest usherer of a new light. The late poet Nobin Chunder Sen, wrote in his autobiography, "whatever heavy sighs I have heaved and whatever tears I have shed for

the love of my motherland, in my short poems on Jessore and the battle of Plassey, to some extent they are the outcome of my association with and instructions from Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose. He and his "Patrika" are the pioneers of patriotism in our country".

The "Patrika" soon grew into something like a terror for the European authorities, made a name for itself and became noted for being honest, upright and independent in views. For the amusement of the reader, we give here a petty incident of its early career It so happened once that a certain bund was being forcibly cut by some indigo planters. The ryots stood up against this, as it meant a great loss to them. They applied to the Magistrate, who appointed one Mr. Mitra, a police Inspector, to look into the matter. The latter, on reaching the spot requested the European planters who were disturbing the peace of the village, not to do so, as it was the order of the Magistrate. The haughty planters made light of Inspector Mitra's warning. There upon the officer arrested some of them. This greatly surprised them and they enquired if the Inspector belonged to the "Patrika" party. This story only illustrates the fearless conduct of the "Patrika" and the wholesome terror it inspired in even an important and powerful body like the planting community. Such instances may be multiplied almost *ad infi-*

nitum but our limited space does not permit this extravagance.

The "Patrika" was hardly more than four months old, when a libel suit was instituted against it by a European Deputy Magistrate. It lasted eight months and ruined the proprietors financially. But the successful advocacy of that well-know criminal lawyer, Mr. Monmohan Ghose, on behalf of Shishir Babu, led to his acquittal. It, however, proved a blessing in disguise, for it secured great popularity to the paper. At this time malaria broke out in Jessore in so virulent a form that Shishir Babu had to leave his ever dear Magura for Calcutta. Notwithstanding many inconveniences and pecuniary difficulties, the "Patrika" now gradually became an influential organ of public opinion in Bengal and caused a great stir in the country. Mr. Caine wrote in his biography of Shishi. Babu ; "The brilliant editing of the paper by Shishir Kumar Ghose, who almost kild himself by hard work and anxiety quickly brought it back to its old issue, and eventually far beyond it, until it became the most influential newspaper in Bengal, and probably in all India, where it circulates from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. For thirty years it has been one of the most potent factors in Indian society and politics; and during that period there has been no solid and lasting reform, which does not owe much to

its influence and advocacy. To my mind, it is the most courageous and outspoken journal in all India. It is read by the Viceroy and his Council, and is alike the organ of Indian prince and Indian peasant."

Under the auspices of the Strachey Brothers with a view evidently to undermine the Permanent Settlement in Bengal, the Government of Lord Mayo imposed a new cess upon the land, still known as the Road Cess. Sir George Campbell created two new classes of subordinate executive officers named Sub-Deputies and Kanungoes, and lowered the position of judges by what is known as the system of parallel promotion. The then Law Member, Sir J. Stephen, by the introduction of his Criminal Procedure Code, made the Police all-powerful in the country. All these resulted in violent agrarian riots in Pabna. The "Patrika" manfully stood against these measures; and as the other papers of Calcutta were quite innocent of any Moffussil experience, it devolved upon it to vehemently attack these measures and lay bare their hollowness and undesirability.

It was Babu Shishir Kumar who first introduced cartoons and skits in Indian journalism. His skit, "Political Geometry", created such a tremendous sensation that scores of Civilians purchased the issue in which it appeared. The "Hindu Review" says: "The "Patrika" came

to special prominence under the Lieutenant Governorship of Sir George Campbell, (1870-73), whose attempt to restrict higher education with the avowed object of diverting the public funds, thus set free, to the diffusion of primary education, aroused opposition from the educated class. And in their criticism of Sir George Campbell's act and policy, Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose and his brothers,—for the "Patrika" has always been a journalistic joint family,—adopted a tone of biting satire and undisguised abuse, which first shook people's nerves somewhat violently, and then gradually put a new courage and self-consciousness into them ".

He was a past master in pun and lampoon, railery and repartee. Ready wit, rugged force, caustic satire, and native humour ran through all his writings, and the gems that thus glistened in his productions were of such real lustre as to have hardly their equal in the writings of any other we can think of. The simplicity of his style and the originality of happy expression were the marked features of his literary productions.

His power of reply and repartee was, again, marvellous, whether it was the "pioneer" or the "Times," no other paper ever got the better of the "Patrika" in this respect. In logic and, debating powers also he stood out unique.

Gradually Shishir Kumar began to grow more

and more popular in the country. He joined the British Indian Association and soon became acquainted with all its members. But very shortly afterwards, he found that the Association was more a show than a really useful institution, and so he made up his mind to make it truly powerful. He proposed to Rai Kristo Das Pal Bahadur and others that the subscription should be reduced from Rs. 50 to Rs. 5 per annum, so as to come within the reach of the middle classes, but his suggestion was not listened to. So he founded another Association called the "Indian League," with which the names of many great men, such as Sir Rash Behari Ghose, the late Mr. Ananda Mohan Bose, Babu Kali Charan Banerji, Hem Chunder Banerji, Grish Chunder Ghose (the dramatist) and Sir Romesh Chunder Mitter, were very closely connected. It was a creation of Mr. Ghose's own brain, and let a distinguished European say what it achieved "'The Indian League' is identified in the social and political development of India, with many most important reforms, notably that of trial by jury, and the Municipal system, which containing the germs of representative government, led on to the establishment of the elective system municipally as well as in its higher development of elected members of the Provincial and Viceregal Councils."

As will be clear from the above, Shishir Kumar

was really the founder of the present system of Council Government in India. Let us now say how it came about. A grand meeting, to discuss the advantages of the municipal elective system, of the Indian League was held under the presidency of Babu Kali Charan Banerji. The proceedings attracted the notice of his Honour Sir Richard Temple, the then Lieutenant Governor of Bengal. The latter called upon Shishir Babu and asked him if he was willing that the elective system should be introduced in the municipal bodies in the country. And this was the first time but by no means the last that Shishir Kumar had the opportunity of having an interview with the governor of the province. To make matters clear, let us quote here a few lines from the conversation that took place between Shishir Babu and His Honour on this memorable occasion :—

L. G.—So you want the elective system? Do you think the citizens are fit for such a boon?

S.—Yes, your Honour, quite fit.

L. G.—You see, I am agreeable. But if I grant you the privilege, there will be such a strom of opposition, that the Government of India will be obliged to go against me.

S.—Will it please your Honour, if I say, that India must have the beginning of self-government, and your Honour must be the man to initiate it?

L. G.—Well, I shall take the risk, but see that the middle classes join you in a body. Let us have the entire middle classes on our side.

S.—I shall induce every voter in Calcutta to support your Honour. We have the largest house-owner, Hiralal Seal, on our side.

As expected, a vehement attack was made by the British Indian Association and the Anglo-Indian community. But in the words of Mr. W. S. Caine, it may be said, "mainly by the help of Shishir and "Amrita Bazar Patrika", it was carried out in the face of the fierce opposition".

Babu Shishir Kumar was the pioneer also in the matter of technical education in India, and the way in which he brought into being the Albert Temple of Science was something miraculous. For some time past Shishir Babu had been advocating the cause of technical education in India. Now somehow he had come to know that Babu Harish Chunder Roy of Mymensingh was willing to contribute Rs. 50,000 towards the improvement of his scheme, if only the Lieut. Governor would ask him to do so; and that at Berhampur there were two brothers, named Lachmipat and Dhanpat who were being compelled by Mr. Mackenzie, the District Magistrate, to pay Rs. 50,000 each for the Berhampur College. Shishir Kumar thought over all this and began to devise means to secure the money so as to materialise

his ideas into a *fiat accompli.* He at last started for Belvedere the residence of the Lieut. Governor. It was 9 o'clock in a winter evening that he waited upon Sir Richard. It was in fact the eve of Prince Albert's visit to Calcutta. Let us reproduce here the conversation he had with his host for the edification of our readers :—

S.—The Prince is coming to-morrow early in the morning and your Honour is going to Diamond Harbour to receive him?

Sir Richard.—Yes.

S.—No sooner does the Prince come, you will be lost to us, for you will be too busy with him. We want to commemorate the Royal visit by establishing the most needed institution in the country, a technical college.

Sir Richard.—Yes, a technical college is the need of the country. But you will need a large sum of money. Have you secured it?

S. Almost.—Only if your Honour will be so good as to help me.

Sir R.—In what way?

S.—Babu Harish Chunder Ray of Mymensingh and Messrs. Lachmipat and Dhanpat of Berhampur are each willing to contribute Rs. 50,000. Your Honour may tell them that this is the best way to use the money.

Sir R.—Very well, if they come to me, I may persuade them.

S.—But you are going away to-morrow at 6 A. M. My plan is this. It is now 9. 30 P. M. If you will kindly give me letters to the three gentlemen asking them to see you before 6 A. M. in the morning, I will arrange the rest.

Sir Richard smiled and said :—What you suggest is improper from the beginning to the end. I don't know them. Yet I am required privately to ask them to come. When they come, I am to ask them to oblige me by contributing Rs 50,000/- each. It would be highly improper for me to interfere with the arrangements that Mr. Mackenzie has made with his people for the improvement of a college in his district.

At last, however, Shishir Babu was able to prevail upon the Lieut Governor, and a meeting under his presidency was held in the premises of the National Theatre and the former's efforts were crowned with success to the great mortification of his opponents. The Albert Temple was established, and got a subside of Rs 8,000/-per annum from the Government.

Sir Richard Temple was succeeded by Sir Ashley Eden. He was a man of peculiar whims. He did not like the bold tone of the "Amrita Bazar Patrika" and so he wanted to moderate it by converting it into a Government paper. He had already won to his side Babu Kristo Das Pal of the "Hindu Patriot" and other Bengali leaders

and he thought it quite easier to buy off Shishir Babu, who was then living a hand-to-mouth existence and had to support a large family of some 30 members. Dear readers, think for a moment the situation! On the one hand was the tempting offer of Sir Ashley Eden at a time of stress and struggle, and on the other, his duties to his motherland. He, however, never gave any thought to the former but decided in favour of the latter. Here are some extracts from the conversation that followed between His Honour and Shishir Babu:—

Sir A.—I know you are a friend, and so I shall make no ceremony with you. I say, why do you abuse us in that way? That I am a friend of the Bengalees is well-known. So Lord Northbrook showed me some of your articles which were so abusive that I did not know what to say. I had to hang down my head in shame.

S.—Your Honour says that we have been abusive, but pardon my impertinence. I challenge anyone to show one abusive expression in our writings. Besides, the law keeps the most reckless newspapers in the land in check. If we had written anything seditious, the Government would have pounced upon us. Since the Government has not ever meddled with us, that is a proof that we are in our writings always within the bounds of law.

Sir A.—The Government is very generous

and you take advantage of its generosity.

S.—But can your Honor point out any expression which is abusive, scurrilous, or even impertinent?

Sir A.—Oh! You mean that you don't use abusive terms. I know that you are very "chalak" (clever) in that respect. You don't call us robbers, thieves, cheats, and murderers, or as many other words. But one can see at a glance, by going through your writings, that you mean nothing else. Lord North brook showed me some of your former issues which he kept in his box.

In this way Sir Ashley tried to seduce Shishir Kumar, but the latter was so strong and so determined that it was found impossible to make him deviate from the right path. When the Lieutenant Governor received the curt reply that Shishir Kumar did not care for the promised privileges and that famous retort that there should be at least one honest journal in the country, he became sored with anger that he even did not hesitate to hold out threats to the latter. "Mind this," said he "in six months I shall drive you away from Calcutta." He now kept his word so far as to withdraw the grant that had been made by his predecessor to the Albert Temple of Science, while it was at this time,too,that the vernacular Press Act (that new fetter on Sir Ashley's legislative anvil) was passed to ruin the editor of the "Patrika."

It would, indeed, be a mistake to suppose that the influence of the "Patrika" was at this or any other time confined to Bengal alone. As the late Mr. Caine used to say, "the "Patrika" is alike the organ of Indian Prince and Indian peasant" and so really it was. Every educated Indian knows that it was Shishir Babu and his paper that came to the rescue of Mulhar Rao Gaekwar when he was sought to be ruined by Col. Phayre, by showing that according to its own promise the Government was not justified in interfering with the internalaffairs of a Native State. It was, again, Shishir Babu who wrote vigorously advocating the cause of the Dowagar Rani of Rewa and the Begum of Bhopal against Sir Lepel Griffin ; and he was at last successful in securing justice by bringing the case to the notice of Lord Dufferin. In short, the " Patrika " appeared to have become, by this time, the mouth- piece of Indian princes. The services of Shishir Babu in connection with the Beames and Gilgit affairs are too well-known to need repetition. It must, however, be said, that it was to his friend, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, a distinguished and influential M. P., that some of the successes were due. His friends in England in those days were Messrs. Bradlaugh, Caine, William, Digby and W. T. Stead.

When on his arrival here in India as Viceory and Governor General, Lord Ripon expressed his

sympathy with the Indian mill-owners, it was the "Patrika" that opposed this view of His Excellency, on the ground that the people of India should first be given the opportunity of saving their lives and then of saving their time. But afterwards Shishir Babu came to realise the noble character and high ideals of Lord Ripon and not only became a great friend of His Excellency but very much influenced his administration. Mr. Primrose, his Private Secretary, was also a great friend of Shishir Babu. The Allahabad Criminal Case, the Webb Case, and the subsequent Viceregal resolution on them clearly testify to the influence of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose over Lord Ripon's Government. It is well known that Lord Ripon introduced self-government in India, but very few people know that the subject of this sketch was his right-hand man in this connection: On the eve of his Lordship's departure from India, Shishir Kumar with folded hands, bent his knees before Lord Ripon, and prayed: "My Lord, you can oblige me eternally by granting my people the privilege of trial by jury." Lord Ripon replied, "my dear sir, rise and oblige me. You pain me very much. I have already given up charge, and I cannot do anything now. Very well, I promise I shall speak to Lord Dufferin about it."

It is impossible to show by instances, in a small compass, what towering influence the

"Patrika" used to possess at the hands of Babu Shishir Kumar. In the memorial meeting of Babu S. K. Ghose held after his death at the Town Hall of Calcutta, Dr. S. K. Mullick related a story. He said that during his long stay in London whenever he paid a visit to the India Office, he found all the Indian and English newspapers lying on the table, but he always missed the "Patrika." On enquiring this fact of Mr. Onslow, the then Under-Secretary, he was told that the "Patrika," as it gave a true and reliable version of Indian affairs from the people's point of view, was preserved in a special file for use of the Secretary of State. Indeed, the "Patrika" was conducted on such original lines that it always was a perennial source of delight not only to its Indian but European readers. Many Europeans used to read it to enjoy the wordy battles that continuously went on between the "Patrika" and the then influential Anglo-Indian papers, and to their mortification the indomitable and sharp-witted "Patrika" could never be cornered, on the other hand they were always made the laughing stock of the public by superior talents of Babu Shishir Kumar. A beautiful skit published in the "Parsee (new Hindi) Punch" at the time very properly explained the situation. Babu Shishir Kumar was depicted as a snake-charmer and the "Pioneer" and the "Times of India" were

represented by two big hooded snakes who wei being played by the charmer to the sound of hi flute (*tumri*).

When the illustrious Mr. Hume was forming schemes in his mind to weld India into a nation by the organisation of a national assembly, he came to Mr. Ghose to take his counsel on this matter. The latter requested him to infuse that idea into the minds of the masses, and he promised Mr. Hume to show the way of doing it. The Jhinkergacha Mass Meeting of the 13th. March 1886, was a practical example of what, Shishir aimed at. It was quite a new departure in the politics and political methods of India and was so successful in essentially teaching the general public to learn to take an interest in their country and its affairs that it proved quite alarming to the opponents of Indian progress and so famous it became that even mention was made about it in some American and English journals, at a time when Indian affairs scarcely came in for any notice in them. Mr. Ranade had come to pay a visit to the Editor of the "Patrika"; and he said that Lord Dufferin was of opinion that it was aimed at doing a great thing, but failed to do it owing to the neglect of his countrymen.

The above is only a short sketch of the political life of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose. It is very difficult to judge the man from this brief resume,

but still we fervently hope, the reader will be able to form some slight idea of him. The biography of Shishir Kumar should itself prove a mine of Indian political information and contain a full account of the Indian administration and the reforms introduced by Lords Northbrook, Lytton, Ripon, Dufferin and others; and when one such comes to be written the world will see how this great man was able to influence all these high officials and thereby contributed his share to the building of the Indian nation.

Babu Shishir Kumar was a voluminous writer. He has written on every conceivable subject and his political writings are so exhaustive and of such perennial interest that they are always a source of inspiration and guide to the present conductors of the "Patrika". A peculiar vein of humour and originality runs through his writings, and combined with freshness and vigour they are, of enduring value. Unfortunately, however only some of his political articles have been embodied in a book called the "Indian Sketches." A second volume of the book was being printed, but for obvious reasons the attempt was given up. Hundreds of volumes of "Indian Sketches" can still be published from collection of articles from the old files of the "Patrika".

A keen observer will be able to see that a certain link of harmony and increasing popularity

extends from his private to his public life, i.e. his life as father or guardian of a family to his life as a benefactor of his countrymen and guardian of their interests. It is true that there are some men in India who could claim greater erudition or wider knowledge of the world besides, but none there has been who have had greater insight into the political position and needs of their own native land.

We shall now give only one instance to show how the misery of men moved the heart of Babu Shishir Kumar so violently that he would not have any rest till he found some remedy. In his younger days he saw a horrible death by snake-bite. The painful picture always troubled his mind till after 20 years' patient labour and investigation he was able to unearth the available remedy and place it before the public in the form of a booklet called "Snakes: Snake-bites and their treatment." The book has since been translated into several vernacular languages and commands a wide sale. We cannot resist the temptation of quoting the following interesting account of the snakes in Bengal from that book:

"I was sitting with the Police Officer in charge of the station at Gopalnagore, then in the district of Nuddea, now in Jessore. It was during the great flood of 1871. I had sought his protection to procure me a boat to convey me, across the sea

of water which surrounded me, to my destination.

Just then intelligence was brought to us, that a troupe of *malvadyas* have caught hundreds of snakes, in a village close by. We sent for them with their snakes, and they came. We saw the snakes that they had caught, but said they ; "Will you go to see, Sir ? It is a sight to see. It is snakes and snakes, all round. We have never seen so many together, no man ever did." And, as a matter of fact, we saw a sight which has been the good fortune of a few people to witness. The sight we saw will never fade from my memory.

We soon organized an expedition. We took three *mals*. The Sub-Inspector of Police, a strong man, took his doublebarrelled gun. We entered the boat at about 11 in the morning. It was a small boat, and was rowed by two men. The current was favorable, and the boat ran like a dog in pursuit of a jackal. We had not to follow the course of a canal or a river, for we were in a vast sheet of water. It would have looked like a sea, but for the trees and huts, which yet shewed their heads above water. The flood was then at its highest, and the people in great distress.

We took the straight course over huts and trees, and in this manner we crossed the village of Gopalnagore. We then entered an open space, and saw in the dim horizon the marsh of *Choital*, our destination. The place was recognized by the

presence of a couple of tall palm trees. We rowed all of us, and though the tiny boat swang to and fro by our vigorous efforts at rowing, we had not much to fear. For, by a pole we kept measuring the water all the way, and though it was deep here and there, generally our passage lay over shallow water.

And at last we entered the *beel* (marsh) of Choital. It is a low land and paddy is grown there, but here and there were high spots, where there were trees. This big field has a diameter of, say, six miles. It is all plain land, with the exception of a few trees which shewed their heads above water. On the first tree on our way, we saw only a few snakes and an iguana. But the *mals* told us that the grand scene was yet before us.

Before us, we saw in that vast sheet of water, a couple of palm trees, a few date trees, and a banian tree. The heads of the palm trees were about thirty feet above water, the banian tree covered a large space of land, and the date trees only shewed their leaves. The palm trees were examined by us first. We saw that the snakes have coiled round the trunks of these trees from the bottom to the top. There was no empty space visible on the trunks.

At the bottom, we saw a few *kraits*, and we saw there a black one which is the biggest we

have ever seen. But though we saw a few *kraits* and a few black snakes here and there, all the others were only *keutas*. There was not cobra there, nor any *hamadryad*. The snakes not only coiled round the trees, but were found to have coiled one above the other. It was thus all black from bottom to top. The branches, which are thorny in palm trees, have been avoided, but the leaves had given space to as many as they could hold. We did not disturb them in their position of rest in the palm trees.

From there we proceeded to the date trees. All the leaves were covered by the snakes. The three *mals* stood to catch them. The rower who was in the front was pushed behind, and one of the *mals* took his oar. He rowed vigorously and caught a branch of a date tree. As soon as he caught the branch, thousands of *keutas* fell from it into the water. The fellow not only caught the branch, but pulled it, and the head of our small boat was thus made to penetrate through the branches. It was then a truly exciting scene. Hundreds and thousands of snakes began to let themselves drop from the branches in the water, and our boat was soon surrounded by thousands of swimming *keutas*.

The Police Officer shrieked in anger and terror, "Let go the boat, you *haramjadas*" cried he, ,'they will soon fill our boat." But I was enthralled

with the scene, and had not the power of feeling any terror. The *mals* were engrossed in the work before them, and they had no ear to listen to the commands of the officer. They buised themselves; in catching the snakes, and were not at all disposed to remove the boat from the position which it had been forced to take.

In a second or two the swimming snakes invaded our boat Of course it was not their object to bite or swallow us, but they found a floating substance in our boat, and they wanted to make it a resting place. The officer was standing with his gun in his hand, and I told him to leave it and take a pole to protect the boat from the snakes. So both he and I took a pole each, and so also did each of the boat men. The snakes swam all around us with only their heads above water. They appeared like a shoal of fish. We began to splash all round our boat with the poles, with a view to drive them away. But their number was too many for us. And a good many touched our boat in spite of the beating of the water.

They tried to climb the boat, but they could not. They could not raise their heads much above water; and it is altogether doubtful, whether, even left to themselves, they could climb the boat. But surely they were not given much time to make the effort. The boat was small; we were standing and beating the water with our

poles; the *mals* were catching the snakes; and all these made the tiny thing reel like a drunken *mehter*, and prevented the snakes to gain a hold of the boat. But greater danger was a-head of us.

The head of the boat had penetrated the dense branches of the date tree, and the *mals* were catching the snakes. They were not catching the reptiles at random, but selecting the biggest! A *keuta* is a creature which is rarely met with. A *mal* will purchase one from a comrade for more than rupees ten. But here they had such a large number to select from, that they avoided the smaller ones, and thought only of catching the biggest which they could reach.

Now their attempt to catch the biggest created more than one serious danger for us. If a big snake, which they had fixed their eyes upon to catch, was not accessible, they dragged the boat deeper, and this took our tiny vessel almost into the bosom of the branches of the date tree. Just bear in mind that all these branches had *keuta* upon them, each containing hundreds and more. The *mals* were catching the snakes; the branches of the tree covered the boat partially, but covered them completely. *Keutas* hung over their heads and licked their foreheads. Snakes came in contact with their ears, arms, and backs. But the *mals* cared not.

When the boat came in contact with the

branches, we raised an alarm. For there was nothing to prevent the snakes creeping over the branches and entering our boat. But we forgot our own danger when we saw to which the *mals* had subjected themselves. They were all "unshaved" *keutas*, and one touch of their fang and the strongest man would have dropped down dead on the spot in five minutes! These snakes surrounded the *mals*. Every one of the three *mals* might have been bitten by one thousand *keutas* at that moment.

We forgot our danger, and indeed at that moment none of us, the *mals* included, was in his proper senses. I recollect seeing a *keuta* licking the fore-head of a *mal*, and having cried aloud and given him a warning. But the warning had not much effect. The *mal* only lowered his head an inch or so, to avoid the contact of the tongue of the *keuta*. One of them muttered, without however stopping in his work, "No fear, Sir: at such times they do not bite." "But they do bite," said I, "during inundations." "Yes, but if they are hurt," was the laconic reply. The *mals* deceived me with a view to work uninterruptedly. The snakes do bite during floods, but on that occasion, the sight produced extraordinary excitement which deprived the *mals* of their senses. When *we* forgot the danger, it is no wonder that *they* should. Besides, they had gone well provi-

ded with lancets, and *sone* cords. Familiarity breeds contempt, and the *mals* have great contempt for these reptiles. On that occasion this contempt was heightened by their large number.

We too caught the contagion, and forgot temporarily our fear of the snakes, and entered into the pleasudres of the exciting work. The snakes swam in shoals round our boat, but we became indifferent to their presence. Those in the date tree had an easy access to our boat, but we gave up the thought of driving them away. Every minute the number of swimming snakes was increasing. For, hundreds were dropping down from the branches of the date trees every second, and the heads of the snakes blackened the water all around us. The date tree shewed no more snakes—on that side where our boat was—except a few small ones here and there.

The *mals* then wanted to go to the other side of the date tree, but we objected and desired to see the banian tree. The boat was turned towards it, and we rowed over shoals of snakes. They tried to give way to our boat, but the crowd was so great that they could not move at their pleasure. When we left the date tree, a athought struck us to make a search of the boat to see whether any snake had been able to find its way into it or not. It was when we had left the date tree that we felt, that we had been in great danger so long.

The banian tree was quite close, and its big trunk was about three feet above water. Just above the trunk there were two big branches stretching slantingly in opposite directions. Between these two sat a wild cat. It was utterly helpless, and was surrounded by *keutas* on all sides. But he lived in peace with them. Or rather the snakes lived in peaçe with him. As our boat approached towards the tree,the creature looked at us piteously, and the sight excited my pity. There was no ferocity of the wild cat in his look. But bang went the gun and the cat fell in the water beneath. While I was gazing at the cat, the Sub-Inspector was steadying his aim at it from behind, from the moving boat. The cat fell, as also a few snakes, shot dead or wounded, for the gun was charged with small shots.

This exploit of the Police Officer I did not like,as it shewed neither courage nor any delicacy of feeling. But the cat was only wounded if wounded at all, for it reached the trunk again, though it took a new position which concealed it from our view.

We gazed at the tree—it was a canopy of snakes. The *mals* wanted to catch more snakes but I opposed. They had caught enough, and no snake could be caught from the banian tree without incurring serious danger. So we only gazed at the snakes, at their beauty, their variety,

and their movements. As for their doings, they did nothing. They coiled round the branches, sometimes one above the other, and kept quiet and immovable. The beauty of their heads surpasses description but this beauty was only seen when they were moving about or raising themselves up in anger or terror, which they only did when teased by us. The variety was so great that it seemed to us that each snake belonged to a separate species. One had a yellow hood, the next one a white, and the next a white and reddish, and so on. The colour of the skin also differed in this manner. The *keutas* have no doubt more than a hundred variety.

While gazing at the snakes, a *mal* cried in excitement: "Lo, there is a *bara bharee samp* (very big snake.)" The other two *mals* saw it at once, but we could not. It was on a branch high above our heads. We could not however identify, which snake was meant. But while we were looking for the "very big snake," one of the *mals* was rowing the boat towards the trunk. The trunk was reached, and he caught it, left the boat, and began to ascend the tree!

Now this we could not permit. The man wanted to ascend a big tree, every available space of which was covered by the most deadly of all snakes. There his expertness and his agility would avail him little. We bawled out to him in tones

of anger to come down instantly. But the man said, *bara bharee samp*, and paid no heed whatever to our commands. I threatened to shoot him if he did not come down, but he repeated, "the snake was very big, Sir!' The fact is, the temptation before him was great, he could not resist it. The *mals* who were in the boat were intently gazing at the snake, and muttering: "he won't be able to catch it. Its position is bad."

But my eye was fixed towards whom I considered the doomed man. As he moved on the branches, there was a rustle amongst the snakes. A good many fell from the branches, and some moved up before the man. These disturbed the others, which were sleeping quietly. Some finding their progress barred, were coming back towards the man. The proceedings of the man would have caused amusement if the matter were not serious. He was moving over a branch in all fours. Now he sat to give the snakes an opportunity of making way for him. When the way was clear for a few paces, he advanced a little and waited again. The snakes which were coming towards him, he pushed away with his hands. In this manner he employed his feet too. But the snakes shewed no disposition to bite him. None raised its hood, or hissed in anger. It was because they were not touched. Those caught in the date tree shewed a good deal of ferocity, but then their

tails had been caught. In the banian tree none was touched, and those which were touched were shoved into the water.

The man then caught hold of another small branch. It was on the branch where the big snake was. He began to crawl over it with great care and difficulty, for the branch was small. And then we saw the big snake—it was a jet black *keuta*. At the approach of the *mal*, the snake shewed signs of uneasiness, and then it moved. Just as it was eluding his hand, the *mal* caught hold of the tail. If the snake had then turned round and attacked him, the only way of saving himself was to throw it down below. But the snake acted otherwise. There was a small branch before it, and it coiled its head round it, and held it firmly. The *mal* pulled it by the tail, but the snake shewed no signs of giving way. The man then held the tail by both the hands and began to pull with all his strength. In the struggle and under the excitement, he lost his balance.

The branch was about sixteen feet above water, and he fell down with a splash into the water below. There was silence for a few seconds, for the water was rather deep there, and he had gone to the very bottom by his fall from such a height. I thought it was all over with him, but he rose again. He was not cowed, but was on the contrary in the highest spirits, and

he cried : "I have it, here it is." While he said this he raised his hand, which had clasped the tail of the snake! Surely the tail was in his grasp! Another *mal* from the boat caught the tail and dragged the snake up. The third held it in the middle, and then it was put into a jar. Under ordinary circumstances a snake like that would have demanded the exertions of two or three men to catch it. But, then, fortune was against it. It was caught in a position where, none of its predecessors perhaps had ever been caught. Talking of position, it had every advantage over the *mal*. If the man had not fallen from the tree, the snake would have never been secured, for it was not in the power of the *mal* to compel a big snake like that to let go its hold of the branch. And then in the water, it could not have also been caught. But the fall hurt it, for, in spite of its strength, it is a tender creature; and in spite of its ferocity, it is usually timid. The fall hurt it, and gave it such a fright, that it never raised its head when it was put into the jar.

I came back to Gopalnagore at about 4 P.M. On the following day I wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to the Commissioner of the Nuddea Division, and to the Magistrate of Nuddea to take prompt measures, for the destruction of the snakes. I wrote to them that at a trifling cost Government could destroy millions of snakes.

The Magistrate asked for permission of the Government to do it, and the latter, wrote to the Magistrate for report. At last it was admitted that my suggestion deserved consideration, and the cost was sanctioned. But then the flood had subsided, and the snakes had entered their holes! The *beel* of Choital is to this day notorious for its *Keutas*."

True perhaps that there are some who by virtue of birth and wealth, rank and riches, Government titles and University distinctions, scientific training and forensic skill, pushing nature and power of gal have thrust themselves so well forward either in the estimation of the ruling race or the notice of the outside world, as to throw him in the background; but when it comes to the judging of any man by the standard of real work-steep, up hill, pioneer work, and of genuine untiring zeal and services to the cause of his country and country men, it is Babu Shishir Kumar's name that occurs first and foremost. He was a veritable patriarch, a veritable patriot, and a veritable spiritualist. Dr. James Coates a well-known author and spiritualist of Scotland writes in his short sketch of Shishir Babu :

Perhaps one of the most interesting points in the Babu's career to us is that he is a veritable patriarch. He might have been translated from the plains of Mamre of the days of Abraham to the

India of to-day. Although a modern journalist, business man, dealer in landed estates, and possessing several interests in public affairs, he is also the father—patriarch—of one of the largest families in India. The family of which he is the head consists of his brothers, their wives, children and grandchildren ; of his own direct descendants, children and grand-children. Add to these the servants and hand-maidens or other dependants of the several distinct branches, all dewelling within the same compound, sleeping there and messing—eating at the same tables, or whatever their equivalent may be in the true Indian home. But this is not all. This very remarkable family —the members of which are spiritualists—are co-operators, all working or interested in or dependent on the various enterprises initiated by the head of this—probably the largest family of the patriarchial order in India today. Such a family and such a community of interests, where all are working in harmony, for the good of each and all is not thinkable by us with our ideas of family life, yet these Hindus do so in love and harmony. The secret is the binding influence of the veritable patriarch's moral and spiritual power. He is regarded by his family and by large numbers of the community as saint on account of his ardent piety and lovableness of his character. There have been many saints in history, and some of

them have not been particularly lovable. Yet, this man, who has been no worker of miracles, is revered as a saint by his country-men, in his life time. Probity in his dealings, marked self-abnegation, devotedness to the welfare and happiness of those of whom he is the family head, have brought him the respect and high merit in which he is esteemed. .That he was an intellectual force there is no doubt, or he would not have been honoured by the government, but it is through being a moral and a spiritual force that he has made his mark.

"It is a strange story for us who are inclined to think that we excel in the excellence of the family, and are a pattern to the world, as far as the meaning of home is concerned, yet this Hindu proves that we have no monopoly of virtues, albeit we claim such high civilization and Christian virtues."

During the latter part of his life, Shishir Kumar founded a monthly journal, called "The Hindu Spiritual Magazine." It is quite a departure from the orthodox Hindu spiritual ideas, as it does away with the theory of re-incarnation. Notwithstanding much opposition to this belief of his from several influential quarters, Shishir Babu was able to maintain his own reputation. This periodical is still being conducted together with the "Patrika" as successfully as before, especially

through the zeal, skill and labours of Babu Moti Lal Ghose, a life-long co-adjutor and fourth brother of Babu Shishir Kumar and of Babu Piyush Kanti Ghose, his eldest son and a veritable chip of the old block. Babu Moti Lal Ghose, the able successor of Shishir Kumar, is now growing old to take any large active part in the public affairs of the country. So the onerous duty of editor has largely devolved upon Piyush Babu, and he has proved, during the last few years, that inspirations from his father far from falling flat upon him have entered his very blood and marrow and made him a successful successor of his father and uncle.

The life of Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose can conveniently be divided into three parts,—social, political, and spiritual. We have already said something about the first two, and we should now say a little about the last one. It is not an easy task for us to write about his spiritual life. We will therefore do what little we can by quotations from his life-sketches from the pens of some profound writers and thinkers of the day. Dr. J. M. Peebles, the great publicist and tourist of America, says;—"Babu Shishir Kumar Ghose was no ordinary personage. He was not only an upright and conscientious man, not only a broad-minded thinker and reformer, but he was in the best sense of the word, a saint,

—a saint whose soul was a fire with devotion to India, politically and religiously, and in a wider sense, to the whole world of humanity—symbolised,—" *We are Brothers All.*" Again Dr. Peebles says, "Never can I forget to the end of mortal life my close social communion, *a blending of America and India* with the lamented originator and editor of the "Hindu Spiritual Magazine". He was a thinker, a scholar, and a brilliant torch of intellectual progress. He was also an affectionate, unassuming man, and yet really great; for all true greatness is based upon goodness, intelligence, and consecration to the benefit of all tribes, races and nations." He lived the life of a saint and in Vaishnava Bhajanas (*Kirtans*) he went into ecstatic trances. He has left behind a large number of *Bhaktas* (devotees) who worship him daily even to this day. His Bengali religious works are the saviours of quite a large number of sinners and they in a manner, brought on a new era, in the religious thoughts of Bengal.

As a token of his undiminishing love and devotion to Lord Gauranga and for the benefit of mankind, Shishir Babu has left a few works upon His life and teachings. These works are;—(1) " Lord Gauranga or Salvation for All", (in English) (2) " Amiya Nimai Charit", (3) " Kalachand Gita", and many others in Bang

great was his love for the religion of Sri Gauranga that he also published a monthly journal in Bengali called "Vishnupriya Patrika" which was after some time made a weekly and named Vishnupriya and Ananda Bazar Patrika." This latter paper did very useful work in the field of Vaishnavism and politics for a large number of years. From a careful perusal of his books and articles in the "Vishnupriya" one will rise a better and wiser man and find himself in the right position to judge of Shishir Babu as a religious preacher. His was a life truly lived for he began as a social reformer, developed into a politician and at last ended as a fervent religious reformer and a spiritualist. Johnson said of Goldsmith, that whatever he undertook he shed lustre on, and let us say with Johnson, that whatever Shishir Babu touched, he touched to better it.

THE GREAT KING ON HIS THRONE

THE irresistible King sat on His Golden Throne, surrounded by His beloved ministers, whom His subjects, divided into diverse races, called Prophets. He ruled with such consummate wisdom that every one thought that the race to which he belonged, was the most favourite of the Lord Sovereign. His laws were so simple that every one could know what they were. But more: He made the obedience to His laws a source of profit to His subjects, and disobedience that of loss. The King, however, lived at a distance, far from the reach of His subjects, and this led those, who had foolishly created perverse tastes for themselves, to break the laws and bring misery upon their heads. When thus afflicted, they sent petitions to the King, and for this they had neither to pay for stamps nor any other fees. All their petitions reached the foot of the Throne direct and without cost.

As the King sat, a petition reached the foot of the Throne, which the Private Secretary took up and read. It was from the Abyssinians who begged protection from the invasion of the Italians. No sooner was the petition read than another was taken up by the Secretary. It was from the

Italians who prayed for victory over the Abyssinians.

The King wanted to know the grounds upon which they prayed for His intervention. The Secretary said in reply that the Abyssinians claimed to be the only loyal subjects of His Majesty, while the Italians preferred the same claim.

The King smiled, and addressing a minister said: "Jesus, My beloved son, they both belong to you. It is for you to advise Me how to satisfy both parties."

Jesus said, "My revered Father. why dost Thou call them my own? I told them distinctly that it would not do to call me "good" and disobey the laws. I have told them that murder is murder whether committed on the high-ways or on the battle-field. I have told them that they are all brothers and must love one another. I cannot call them my own, who disobey Your laws and then selfishly throw all the responsibility upon my shoulders."

The King again smiled, and ordered the petitions to be filed with the remark, that the parties must take the consequence of their own acts.

Just then a petition came from Emperor William. Emperor William wanted to keep Alsace and Lorraine in his possession and prayed for the assistance of the King. He proposed in his petition, that if the King afforded the necessary help, he,

the Emperor, would offer the King, in return, his hearty thanks, and praise Him and proclaim His glory.

The King again turned to Jesus and said.—"How is it that Emperor William thinks me such an idiotic fool? His idea is to bribe me by a few good words to help him in pursuit of his selfish ends. Let the petition of Emperor William be filed without any order."

The Armenians sent a petition for protection from the Sultan, and the Sultan did the same to protect himself from the Christian Powers. The King addressed Mahomet and said, "Beloved Friend, what have you to say to this?" Mahomet replied: "Brother Jesus is in a better position to give the reply than I am. Previously my followers were the stronger party, but his are now the masters of the situation."

Just then petitions reached the Throne from the battlefield in Chitral. The Christian prayed for victory, and the Mussalmans prayed for the same thing. The Christians charged the Mussalmans with being followers of a pretender and false Prophet, and the Mussalmans charged the Christians with being unbelievers and therefore enemies of the King whom it is therefore meritorious work to kill.

Both Jesus and Mahomet were appointed arbitrators to settle this dispute. How it was done

is not known, this, as a Foreign Office matter, being kept a profound secret.

A petition reached the Throne, praying for forgiveness of the sins of the neighbours of the petitioner. The King smiled graciously and said, "This is very good of the applicant, but what has he done of his own sins?" The Secretary replied with folded hands: "May it please Your Heavenly Majesty, the petitioner is an Englishman. He thinks that he has his privileges; at least, as an Englishman, he will manage it somehow or other to push himself here into Heaven."

The Christians sent a petition to the King for the possession of Africa. They said that the savages who inhabited the continent did not know the King, while they, the Christians, were loyal subjects. They worshipped His only Prophet Jesus, and attended churches on Sundays. They distributed the Bible and spent lots of money for the spread of the Kingdom of the King. They claimed that by these immense sacrifices they had conferred infinite obligations on the King. And in return what they wanted was to massacre the savages of Africa with Maxim guns; to take possession of their land and goods; to subjugate them; and to build a Colonial Empire.

The King said: "They may have what they want, but how will they profit by the possession I do not see at all. First, they break all the laws

laid down by me and bring misery upon themselves; secondly, they, every one of them, will have to come here in a short time, leaving all their possessions behind, to render an account for their actions. They will have to explain why they committed murder, why they stole, and why they did other unlawful things." Then turning to Jesus, the King said sorrowfully: "And was it for this that you, my beloved son, bled?"

THE BABOO.*

[The following is an extract from the unpublished diary of a globe-trotter in India.]

IT was at Cawnpore, that I first heard of that strange animal of Bengal, of which so much has been spoken and written. I was expecting every moment my friend with whom I was staying, for it was past office hours, when he rushed in, apparently in a great fury, and threw himself prostrate upon a sofa. I soothingly inquired of him the cause of his illhumor, and he said that his "Baboo would be the cause of death to him." "What was a Baboo?" thought I. I had heard of baboons and seen some of them in Africa, but never a baboo. I asked what was a baboo, and at this simple query, my friend laughed immoderately, till tears trickled down his cheeks. "Never heard of or saw a baboo in your life?" said he. "Well, a baboo is a strange animal and very vicious too," I was a little annoyed at his unseasonable merriment and told him so, but he apologised and told me that a baboo not only vexed but also amused him a great deal.

* In the beginning the Bengal Zemindar was the object of wrath to the average Englishman in India When that class had been very much humbled, the wrath was transferred to the "Baboos" of Bengal, by which expression were meant those natives of Bengal who had learnt the English language.

I wanted to see his baboo, for I was informed that the baboo had its own and separate quarters. I requested my friend to send for its keeper to come along with the animal; but to my astonishment I was told that his baboo roamed at large and did not need the services of a keeper. Well, what was then a baboo? I petulantly asked. My friend said that it was an animal from Bengal which was his constant tormentor. It annoyed and irritated him very much, and it oftentimes roused his worst passions, "It will approach you when you don't want him and stick to you, and at last render you a helpless idiot."—

I interrupted him and inquired why then he kept a baboo at all. He said, because, he could not help it; "every European has a baboo and it is impossible to do anything in this country without its help. Baboo labour is cheap, and the baboos are very useful animals."

I did not fully understand what my friend meant; his words mystified me more than ever, and I inquired why he did not break those which proved vicious.

Friend.—They are all vicious, and as to breaking them I dare not. They have paws and teeth and they can both scratch and bite.

Trotter.—Are they more ferocious than the Bengal tiger and the African lion?

Fr.—The baboo is a very gentle creature, indeed.

Tr.—Why, then, don't you shoot him down whenever you find him, despite his cheap and useful labour?

Fr.—Shoot a baboo! I would rather cut off my right forefinger. I dare not even flog him, and I am obliged even to humour him and treat him as a fellow-being. Shoot a baboo! You don't know what would be the consequences of such a rash act. Shoot a baboo and he will no doubt be dead, but then the other baboos of the country,—thousands and tens of thousands, will join together, and raise such a piercing, terrible awful, unearthly howl that it will shake the nerves of the boldest amongst us. They will howl from street to street, from town to town, from province to province, from Calcutta to Bombay.

Tr.—I see, I see, the baboos are then a species of apes which I saw in large numbers in America. They are called howling monkeys, of a brown color, with a capacious pouch under their chins.

Fr.—They are not howling monkeys, my friend, but they more closely resemble the human species, though I must tell you that the lower orders are now and then mistaken for apes and shot by the Europeans. But you are going down to Calcutta: you will see plenty of them there. You will see baboos also in all the Railway Stations, for baboo power is absolutely necessary

to make the cars go, but my last injunction to you is, avoid a baboo!

On the following morning I purchased a Calcutta ticket, and before getting into the train, closely examined the engine which waited there for some time, to see where the baboo power was applied. There the engine stood just like other engines I had seen in England and other places; and I could not see where the baboos were yoked. I inquired of the engine-driver, and evidently not understanding me, he pointed out to me one of the office rooms. Just then the bell rang and I was obliged to go in. There were some other Europeans in the car, and, as I was putting my luggage into order the door of the compartment was violently shut by a gentleman who, evidently highly incensed, told to a fellow-passenger, "a rascally baboo was coming in." Though the gentleman was unknown to me, I could not help inquiring, with a shudder, whether the door had been properly shut, for I felt a little nervous. He said it had been shut but not locked. I then inquired where the baboo then was, for I longed to have a peep at him from such a safe place, surrounded as I was by my countrymen; but he said that the baboo had been kicked out, and had perhaps entered another compartment.

I then thought within myself that the "yahoos" of Swift were probably the baboos of Bengal.

Most anxious was I to see how the baboos helped the motion of the train, but I could not. At every station the guard called out "baboo, baboo;" but as the car moved immediately, I thought that, that was an encouraging word to the baboos to do their duty better. There was a Civilian Magistrate of up-country sitting next to me, and to him I confidently said how anxious I was to see a baboo. "Do no such a thing," said he, "his very touch is contamination I have tried to close my doors against him. I wish I had succeeded." "Why do you allow them to come to you!" said I. "Very difficult to resist them," muttered he.

There was a missionary gentleman in the compartment who crossed himself when the name of the animal was mentioned, and said that it was on account of these baboos, that he could not propagate his faith. The Magistrate said that the baboos were the greatest foes of the Civilians; they ought to be put down at all cost. There was a medical man who swore that he would take the first opportunity of transferring himself to a station where there were no baboos. A baboo had made him very uncomfortable in his present post and deprived him of his practice. There was an engineer too, who clenched his fist and well nigh broke the door by striking it, while he cursed the meddlesomeness of his baboo.

The Magistrate hissed "baboo." The mis-

sionary cursed the "baboo." The Doctor swore at the "baboo." And every one hissed "baboo" between his teeth.

All this was enough for me. I did not choose to encounter a baboo just then, as my revolver was out of order. "Well you will find plenty of baboos at the Howrah Station," wickedly observed the Magistrate, and a cold tremor came over me.

How to avoid them, was the thought that engrossed my mind. Calcutta was at last reached, my companions boldly opened the door and came down upon the platform, but somehow or other the late talk had made me a little nervous, and I was not prepared to come across a baboo just then. So I loitered and peeped through the doors to see whether there were baboos on the platform, and what they were like; but the porters teased me very much. I asked them in English whether there were any baboos roaming there at large, and a porter ran away apparently to beckon some body. Forthwith came a native gentleman; and with that respectful demeanour which they always preserve before Europeans, he inquired what I wanted. What could I say? I said I must alight, and the gentleman very obligingly helped to remove my luggage to the platform. But I was still in the car and very anxious: I was constantly directing my glance towards the platform. The gentleman again enquired to know whether I

wanted anything more. "Well," I stammered, "my dear, dear—s—sir, are the b—b—baboos all gone!" 'Not all!' said he. "Where are they?" I whispered in his ear. He enquired, why I asked. "My d-dear s-sir, not so loud, I simply want to know," said I. He said: "Well, sir, I am a baboo." "You, a baboo!" shrieked I. My brain reeled and I fainted away!

SUTTEE IN INDIA

It has been always assumed that Sutteeism, that is, the practice of a disconsolate woman burning herself to death with the dead body of her husband, is a barbarous institution, and the British Government conferred a benefit by abolishing it. We shall show that these assumptions have no basis to stand upon. A Suttee occurred but very rarely in India. Of course, when the institution was abolished, the Government had to state that more Suttees occurred than what actually did. The East India Company were deservedly unpopular with the people of England, and they wanted to stand well with their countrymen. They selected the Suttee question for their purpose, and they represented that the horrible evil was a common spectacle. As in the case of the Age of Consent Act, the existence of the evil was established by "cases" which had no real existence, and the East India Company took great credit from the civilized world by abolishing it.

But, as a matter of fact, Suttees occurred very rarely, once in, say, fifty years in a part of the country, with a population of several millions. Whenever a Suttee occurred, tombs of the husband and the Suttee were erected to commemorate

the great event, and these tombs carefully preserved by the descendants of the Suttee. So it is possible even now to ascertain how many Suttees occurred in Bengal within the last two hundred years. We have seen only one such tomb in this vast province of Bengal. We saw one such tomb also in the great and holy city of Benares. The event had occurred just after the advent of the English, and the tombs of the couple were carefully preserved. We have seen a very few in other places of India too.

It is true, when the custom prevailed, a good many women wanted to become Suttee just after their bereavement. But they were not permitted by their friends. When a lady expressed a desire to become Suttee, she had to undergo certain tests. Every one of the competitors for the honor failed, and it was only, say, one in a hundred thousand that had the glory. The tests simply were that everything possible was done to dissuade her from the sacrifice, and it was when she had succeeded in carrying all her people with her, that she was permitted to die with her husband. The following account of a Suttee is taken from her friends who took part in the ceremony.

We saw in the Bankura district two small tombs on the banks of a small lake. We enquired of the man who was with us, of the reason of this strange spectacle in a purely Hindoo village, and

so close to the house of the Gossains. He said: "The tombs contain the ashes of the Suttee and her husband, who were both burnt on this very spot. The Suttee belonged to the family of the Gossains, and there may be persons yet living who could give you an account of the whole affair."

On hearing this, a strange emotion seized us, and we knelt by the tomb of the lady, and then prayed with clasped hands: "Teach us, noble soul, Sacrifice; teach us Devotion and Fidelity; teach us Love."

The village is in the district of Bankura, and called Gader Dehee, where resides the Gossain family, celebrated throughout that part of the country. We were led to an old man who had himself assisted in the ceremony, being the younger brother of the husband of the lady. He was twenty-two when his brother died; his brother was forty-five, and the lady, the Suttee, was twenty-five. The event happened 59 years ago, and so the old man, who related the story to us, was then 81. The name of the husband of the lady was Brahmananda Gossain, and he died of fever in the morning. Now we shall speak in the words of the narrator: "She wept not, but sat by the dead body of my brother. How we wished that she could give vent to her feelings, and relieve herself. But no, she sat and uttered neither a sigh nor a groan. At last she rose and

proceeded straightway towards the Thakur Baree of God Sree Krishna. There she went, followed by many men and women, and prostrated herself before the holy Image of God. There she stood, and began to divest herself of the ornaments, that she had on her person. One by one she took them off and placed them at the feet of the God, for the first time speaking in these words: "Here, my Lord, take them, I need them no longer." And then she slowly came back to where the body of her husband was lying covered. She then addressed her brother-in-law and said: "Prepare for the ceremony of cremation, and you know I can't live without him. I must accompany him."

Though her relations, friends and neighbours had all suspected that something serious was impending, the first announcement was received with a shock which could not be described. Then followed dissuasions and they all began to dissuade her to no purpose The uncle-in-law, the mother-in-law, whom a Hindu lady is bound to revere next to God, commanded, and then earnestly pleaded to her to forbear; but she was not to be moved. Then came the *Guru* the *Purohit*, whom, as her spiritual guides, she was bound to obey; they tried their best, but she was as firm as rock.

Time rolled on, and she wavered not for a moment. Then the last device was resorted to.

Her fears were appealed to; they described to her the horrible and painful sufferings of a living being upon a funeral pile. At first she disdained to give replies to their appeals to her fears, but at last, when obliged to say something, she said: "You need not be anxious; my soul has fled with my Lord. As for bodily sufferings, I shall shew you that I need not apprehend them." There was a lamp burning, according to the usual custom by the corpse, and she put one of her fingers upon the slow flame of the lamp and burnt it without winking. Crowds had then collected from all parts of the country. It was then about 4 p. m. and the corpse was carried to the burning ghat on the bank of the small lake, only about a couple of hundred yards from the house, and the lady followed, followed by thousands of men and women, chanting "Haribole." The crowd then began to collect dry faggots, and heaps were gathered in a moment.

While the funeral pile was in the process of being prepared, the corpse was bathed, and the lady herself performed her ablutions. She then put on vermillion on her forehead,* and dressed herself in a new Saree (cloth for ladies) and then

* Women who have husbands alone have the privilege of putting on the vermillion. The vermillion shewed that she disdained to live as a widow Indeed, before ascending the funeral pile she dressed herself as a new bride going to her husband.

slowly ascended the funeral pile. Her hair was properly adjusted by her friends, and they adorned her with garlands and wreaths of flowers. The crowd then, with tearful eyes, begged of her blessings and some tokens from her to be kept in remembrance of her self-sacrifice. She was supplied with cowries, plantains, betel-nuts, &c., and she began to throw handfuls of them amongst the crowd. She then laid herself by the corpse of her husband in the posture of a warm embrace. She gave the order, and the pile was lighted in several places and there was at once a blazing fire. The Suttee raised her right hand and began to utter the name of "Hari," turning her hand round and round. This was followed by loud responsive shouts of "Haribole" from the crowd. She was dead before the fire had reached her sacred person. The lady had no child."

But we inquired: "How was it that, you being many thousands, you say, almost a hundred thousand, you could not prevent a fragile lady from burning herself?"

To this the old Brahmin replied: "It could not be done. She sat there as a statue, the most beautiful woman in the world. There was no sorrow on her face; on the contrary, it beamed, as it were, with ecstacy ; and it seemed that light was emitting from her whole body. She was simply unapproachable and irresistible, and the

seething mass stood transfixed with awe before her. It was not possible for man to go against her wishes, the greatest of monarchs could not have done it."

When the real spirit of Sutteeism descends to a lady she becomes irresistible, and, though the Government has stopped it, Suttee may occur even now any day. It is not, therefore, quite correct to say that the Government has stopped it, it has stopped of itself.

The description given above of the Suttee tallies exactly with cases to which Europeans have been eye witnesses.

APRIL, MAY AND JUNE

In those early days when gods did not disdain to come down from their celestial abodes to hold converse with men below—that such things happened, the Bible is our witness—the fishermen of Bengal prayed to Heaven to be protected from thieves. Their god, for each caste had its own, came down to listen to what they had to say. The fishermen said that their custom was to spread nets in rivers at night and watch. But the river-breeze induced sleep, and when they fell down overpowered by it, the thieves stole all the fishes that were netted. They, therefore, prayed for something to neutralize the effects of the river-breeze. Their god was moved to pity and gave them mosquitoes as a remedy against drowsiness. Thus came mosquitoes in India, says the legend of the fishermen.

The Bannias amassed gold, and were, in like manner, robbed by thieves. They prayed to their god to afford them some protection from the robbers of their hard-earned property. The god came down and said that fishermen had got mosquitoes, and those insects ought to be a sufficient protection to them also. The Bannias said that they had acquired a bad name for them-

selves by their economical habits. They were considered stingy, so stingy indeed, that even the mosquitoes have been affected by this foul rumour. Indeed, they have been so scared away by the rumour that they (the mosquitoes) avoided them as they did not expect a drop of blood from them. They wanted something more potent than mosquitoes. On reflection, the god gave them poisonous snakes. Thus came these reptiles in India. The terror of being bitten by snakes which glided about at night, gave, in those days, sufficient protection to the Bannias from thieves.

Thus did India get its scourges, one by one, obtained by the people themselves, by their selfish folly. But, at one time, a national prayer was offered up to all the gods of the country. The gods had desired the people to live in peace, and treat all men as brethren and perform all religious sacrifices. The people followed the rule of life thus laid down by the thirty-threee millions of gods for them. The result was disastrous; for, they forgot to fight and thus became objects of attack to all ungodly and powerful nations.

When the entire nation prayed, all the gods came down, and these thirty-three millions of celestial beings with their consorts looked, says the legend, like a swarm of glow-worms. They filled the whole heaven, and were yet fifty miles deep! The people with folded hands prayed to

the gods to be protected from the invaders of their country.

The god of the fishermen thus replied addressing the people,—"You ought to have no fear of any invader. I have given your country mosquito. No foreign nation will consequently care to come to India." The people submitted that mosquitoes would be no protection at all.

The god of the Bannias then said that he had given them poisonous snakes, and surely no nation would, after that, venture to come to India. The people again demurred.

The thirty-three millions of gods with their consorts then held a consultation amongst themselves, but could arrive at no definite and satisfactory conclusion. One goddess interrupted the proceedings by declaring that she would do the needful. She would give cholera, and that would afford the most adequate protection to India against all invaders. The name of this ever to-be-feared goddess is Ola Debi or the Cholera Goddess.

The deluded people of India accepted the gift with joy, but they were not yet satisfied. The gods held another conference, and they at last succeeded in arriving at a definite conclusion. They said that invasions of India could only be made by powerful nations, and powerful nations come from cold countries. To make India

intolerable to such people, the country ought to be made hot. Thus two hot months were given to India—the months of Baisakh and Jaishta. The gods calculated that any nation from the cold countries, however tenacious of purpose would be compelled to flee from their beloved India, when subjected to the heat of April, May and June.

The overpowering heat which makes the life of every inhabitant of the Indian plains miserable, reminds us of the above legend which we heard in our early days; and which is still believed in by the ignorant masses of the country as true. If you ask them to explain how, in spite of the mosquitoes, the cobras, the cholera and the heat, India has been taken possession of by a nation hailing from a cold country, the believers in the above legend will tell you that, in this iron age, the gods have been rendered powerless by men. And are not the English, they will tell you, a nation powerful enough to defy even the ordinances of so many gods as thirty-three millions.?

We are, however, disposed to agree with the gods that the heat of April, May and June ought to be sufficient terror to any people from any cold country. The gods were right in their calculation, but they had no idea of the tenacity of purpose of an Englishman. Many of those Englishmen and Scotchmen, who come to India to earn money by entering service, do not act wisely. They do no

good to themselves in any way,by coming out here. India is as much dreary to them, as Siberia is to a Russian prisoner. They have to leave society behind to find no society here. They have to live alone in the midst of millions of aliens. They have to leave dear surroundings of their early days to live amongst strangers. They have to do the same thing over again, all the days of their lives. Their pay is fat no doubt, but their work is hard too. They have barely time to enjoy the necessary sleep of seven hours. The heat is unbearable for a native: it can well be conceived how dreadful it must be to inhabitants of cold countries. It is true they earn some money ; but what of that? When in their old age they go home with their bags of money, they find themselves again in the midst of strangers, with no friends and no congenial spirits to make their existence bearable. All that they gain is that they die rich, if that is any consolation at all. The best thing for them is for most of them to go home. Let those who can spend their days on hills alone remain for the purpose of ruling the country.

ONE OF THE LAST KINGS OF BENGAL.

When the Bengalees were independent, they were a warlike race. Martial spirit, like Goddess Lakshmi, is fickle, and travels from one nation to another. A nation which is weak now, may become strong under the impulse of circumstances. This can at once be proved by a reference to history. The Bengalees were at one time not only a warlike, but also a conquering, race. This was under the Sen Kings of the province. These Sens are Kayasthas according to Ayin Akbari, and Vaidyas according to popular belief.

The most warlike of these Sen Kings was Vijoy. He conquered Assam, Madras and Ceylon, and sent a fleet to the West by the Ganges, with what result is not known. But the martial spirit, the nation began to decline after the reign of Vijoy. Bengal was at last wrested by the Mussalmans from the hands of its old King, Lakshman Sen.

He is called Lakshmania by the Mussalman authors. But popularly it is believed that the last Sen King of Bengal was Lakshman Sen who, when the Mussalmans came, was eighty years of age. When the Mussalmans invaded Bengal, he

fled without offering them any battle. The Mussalman authors refer to a legend in connection with this King of Bengal. It is this: Astrologers had predicted that if his mother gave him birth at a certain auspicious moment, he would live to reign eighty years in Bengal. His mother was big with child, when his father died. The auspicious moment was approaching; but the infant in the womb was in a hurry to be born, and, indeed, he would have come down two hours before the auspicious moment, had not the mother adopted a sure means of preventing it. She had herself hung up by the two feet, with the head downwards. She was taken down at the proper time; and when she gave birth to her child (Lakshman Sen) he was immediately proclaimed King. The mother, however, died of the means she had adopted to secure eighty years' reign for her son.

After Vijoy Sen, the Bengalees devoted themselves to arts, sciences, and literature. Mithila was the centre of the Naya philosophy, but Bengal soon after eclipsed that famous seat of learning. The Naya (logic), the Tantra (religious philosophy), literature, mathematics and poetry, etc., engrossed the attention of the higher classes of Bengalees during the days of the last Sen Kings of Bengal.

The last King, Lakshman Sen, was himself a great poet, and he surrounded himself by poets.

His wife was a poetess, so was his son, so was his daughter-in-law, and so were his ministers. The great Jaydeva was the first poet at his court, and his rival was Umapati Dhar. This Umapati Dhar was a Suvarnabanik. Dr. Rajendra Lala Mittra mistook him for a Brahmin, however. Jaydeva talks of this Umapati in his great book, the best lyrical poem in the world, the Geeta Govinda. We said Lakshman Sen was himself a poet; some of his pieces are extant, and they are written in Bengalee characters.

Fancy the spectacle of a King and his cabinet devoting themselves to poetic pleasures! The village communities took care of themselves; and, being too strong for the governors, remained virtually independent. The King could be only approached by a subject with a Sloka (couplet) in hand. There was no other way of having access to him. A good sentiment, a happy simile, or an apt metaphor carried the day with him.

The King had once sent his son to a distant part of his dominions on some business. The wife of his son pined away. The son could not come home without the permission of the King, his master; nor could he himself venture to ask it. But the wife of his son conceived and carried out a bold plan. She entered the bed-chamber of the King, her father-in-law, when he was out, and wrote a couplet which is known to almost all

pandits versed in Sanskrit. But there is no harm in giving a translation of the couplet. It is this :—

"The clouds are pouring without intermission, and the peacocks are dancing with joy ; on such a day, death or my beloved alone can remove my sufferings."

The King, on entering his room for his afternoon nap, saw the couplet on the wall, and was deeply moved. On inquiry he learnt that it was the work of his daughter-in-law ! He left his bed, and immediately sent an express for his son.

On another occasion, the King absented himself from home for a considerable time to the detriment of business, because of his love for a low-born damsel. His son sent him two couplets which were addressed to a river. They may be translated thus : "Generally cool art thou, O river ! and transparent by nature. Thou art thyself not only pure, but makest every thing pure by thy touch. But more. Art not thou the life of all living things ? Why then dost thou flow downwards ?"

The penitent King, of course, hastened to his capital. When the Mussalmans came, the King was eighty years old. It is further said he had no heirs. He called all the philosophers of his court together. They were all poets and pious men ; and none of them had any taste for fighting, They all addressed the King in these terms : Life was like a drop of water on a lotus leaf. The object of

life was salvation. It was only mad men who fought for the acquirement of earthly blessings. It was a horrible sin to shed the blood of an animal; how much more horrible then it was to shed human blood! Let the Mussalmans enjoy the blessings of the world. They were fools to endanger their hereafter for such worthless advantages. They must endanger it, if they possessed them at the cost of others. "Let us." said they, "enjoy the nectar that flowed from the lotus feet of Sree Krishna."

English education has effected a good deal of change in the instincts of the Hindus of Bengal. But yet the feelings, which guided the last Sen King and his advisers, have not lost their hold completely upon their minds. Political agitation and political privileges are ideas imported from the West, and the Bengalees have not been able to acclimatize them yet in their country. What the rulers need to keep them contented is to leave them alone, with the enjoyment of their simple food, domestic enjoyment, intellectual pleasures, and religious exercises. If the rulers of the land had not tried to interfere with the domestic arrangements of the Bengalees and with their cherished objects and notions, they would have grown no political institution or newspaper in our country.

A STORY OF PATRIOTISM IN BENGAL.*

THE death of our lamented countryman, Mr. Ganesh Vasudev Joshi of Poona, and the attempt of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (Sir Ashley Eden) to snub Mr. O'Donnell, a District Magistrate, for directing public attention to the abuses of the indigo planting system in Behar, reminds us of a promise, we had made to a friend, of disclosing to the world the secret of the origin of the great indigo disturbance in Bengal in which millions of indigo ryots and other Bengalees shewed a degree of patriotism, self-sacrifice and devotion scarcely witnessed in the annals of the world before. People in jail refused to sow indigo, though solemn promises were held out by the authorities to set them free; to rebuild their houses, which had been destroyed by their opponents, the planters; and to restore to them their families, wives and children who had been roaming in the country as beggars. People refused to sow indigo even for a year. Thousands thus preferred indescribable miseryto handling indigo seed again.

* This appeared in 1880 in the AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA.

The rulers of the Empire know not the origin of this great combination. It is yet a mystery to them as to how a combination of the apathetic Bengalee ryots, a combination in which about five millions of men took part, was brought about so secretly and so suddenly without the authorities knowing anything about it. We shall disclose the secret to-day, for the benefit of the rulers of the land. There is no longer any need for secrecy as both the noble heroes of our story are dead.

In the village of Chougatcha, district Nadia, lived two gentlemen, Babus Vishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas. They were both men of some property: Babu Vishnu Charan was a small Zemindar, and Babu Digambar, a Mahajan, that is, he lent money and paddy on interest. They were not acquainted with the English language, but they were men of indomitable perseverence and courage. They were, besides, men of heart, and had a large share of that intelligence which generally characterises a Bengalee gentleman. Both of them served as Dewans of several indigo factories in the district of Nadià, and they were obliged to leave service in disgust, as Dewans of indigo factories, who had hearts, had to do in those days.

In those days, the indigo planters of Bengal governed the country with despotic sway. Sir Frederic Halliday was not aware of the real state

of affairs, and the planters found in him a warm friend and supporter. So much so that the ignorant ryot had been led to believe that the Government had a share in all the indigo concerns of the country. The more intelligent believed that the Lieutenant-Governor was personally interested in some indigo factories. At least, the planters never failed to give circulation to that rumour, to the damage of that worthy statesman's character. In short, the planters obtained the support of the executive, from the police constable to the head of the province, in their acts of spoliation and oppression.

They held courts, criminal and civil, and awarded all sorts of punishment. They confined men in their own jails, and sometimes did much worse. They were not respectors of persons; and Zemindars and ryots trembled before them. In short, they were the absolute masters of the persons and properties of the people, and they never failed to exercise, to the fullest extent, the despotic powers they possessed. The ryots meekly suffered, for they had no help. If they resisted, their villages were plundered, and sometimes burnt down and some of them murdered. The Magistrates punished, not the planters, but the injured ryots. The ring-leaders were sent to prison on alleged charges of damaging indigo crops and others too numerous to

mention and this kept the people in a quiet state.

It was during the government of Sir Frederic Halliday, that this system of growing indigo was pushed to its uttermost limits. Previously the planters fought amongst themselves, and thus enhanced the value of the indigo ryot, and he obtained protection from rival planters. But the shrewd planters saw their mistake, and formed themselves into a body, for the purpose of avoiding these internal dissensions. From that day the indigo ryots of Bengal became utterly helpless. And when everything was rife for an outburst, Babus Vishnu Charan and Digambar applied the lighted match to the fuse. It took however, two years to ignite the whole country.

Babu Vishnu Charan left the planter's service in disgust. He saw, and was made to do, things which shocked his feelings; and he at last came to the determination of not serving the planters, but to expel them from the country, if possible. He knew that the planters never resorted to law-courts unless they were forced by circumstances. Law was expensive; but this deterred them not so much as the idea that going to the law-courts would cause damage to their prestige. "Why should I allow that damaging idea to be circulated that I am not strong enough to subdue refractory ryots and that I have a master in the hakims?"

thought the average planter. Babu Vishnu Charan thought that the first thing necessary was to defy the planter; the second to fight a battle and win it; and the third, to rouse the whole country. He knew that the first battle won would secure to him allies. The ryots had been goaded to desperation for they were reduced almost to the condition of Carolina slaves in spite of the law-courts with which the country was studded.

He counselled with Digambar Biswas who heartily entered into the plot. It was just at the time when Nana Saheb was organizing his revolt. Nana's efforts were directed against the Government, those of the two Biswases against the planters. The first thing that they did was to prevent the ryots of their village from sowing indigo, and to promise them protection. They sent envoys to other villages to induce the ryots to join in the combination, and engaged the services of renowned lathials (clubmen) whom they brought from the east, *i. e.*, Barrisal. All the villages declined to join them except one, and to that village they sent eight spearsmen for its protection. The planter, who was thus defied, resolved to nip the rebellion in the bud, and collected about a thousand men, about one hundred of whom were regulars. Mind all these preparations were being made within eight to ten miles of the sudder station, the town of Nadia!

The planters spread a rumour to the effect that they would attack the village of Chougatcha on a certain day, and in the morning of that day actually advanced towards it. But wheeling round suddenly, they attacked the village which had joined the two Biswases. The villagers had entrenched themselves within an impenetrable fence ; but, deceived by the rumour of the planters, they had sent away four out of the eight lancers they had for their own protection to help the garrison of chougatcha. They were thus taken at a disadvantage, and found themselves surrounded by one thousand men. The fence protected them for a time, but eventually the village was taken by assault and plundered, one of the Sharkiwallas or spearsmen being wounded, who subsequently died in the factory.

So the first battle was lost, and the combination might have collapsed, but for an extremely lucky circumstance. About that time, the district of Nadia was in charge of a young and zealous officer who, unlike the majority of his brother Magistrates, had no particular partiality for the planters. The fact of the dispute came to his notice, and taking an elephant, he came to make inquiries personally. He found that the planters were the aggressive party, and he began to deal even-handed justice. This encouraged the ryots a little, and Babus Vishnu Charan and Digambar

freely supplied them with funds for law and other expenses. The name of this Englishman, to whom Bengal is for ever indebted, is Mr. R. L Tottenham, lately one of the Judges of the Calcutta High Court.

This officer was transferred from the district, for evincing his zeal on behalf of the wronged, but the leaders of the combination tried, by all means in their power, to keep up the spirit of the ryots who had thrown off the yoke of the planters. It was at this time that the patience and patriotism of the Biswases were sorely tried. The planters' scouts kept watch day and night for the purpose of waylaying them. They could, therefore, only travel by night when leaving home. They were under the constant apprehension of being invaded in their own village by overwhelming numbers, and they slept with their swords drawn They engaged the services of a large body of lathials, who kept guard over the village day and night. Almost all the villagers had sent away their families to live in the houses of relatives.

Any ordinary man would have succumbed to the series of troubles which beset the Biswases,—troubles, a faint idea of which we have given above. But they had other troubles from unexpected quarters. The ryots, for whom they were suffering so much in every way, did not feel that they were as much obliged to them, as the Biswases

were to them for joining in the combination. Comes one ryot to say: "I owe so much to the planter, and I cannot pay it. If I join him, he will make over the bond to me. If you pay the amount I join you." The Biswases did pay the amount. The planters obtained decrees against many ryots, but the money was ungrudgingly paid by the Biswases. There were ryots who were rascally enough to lay blackmail upon the Biswases simply for their forbearance in not going against them!

Another village joined them, and another. Within the course of a year and-a-half, they found the factory tottering. The ryots had become then the stronger party. The tidings spread far and wide that the indigo ryots had fought and won against the planters. This the ryots could never believe before. Babus Vishnu Charan and Digambar shewed by their disinterested patriotism that it was possible, even for little men like them, to wage a war with the formidable planters of Bengal and that successfully. The prestige of the planters was thus utterly destroyed. The ryots of Lokenathpore concern in the same district were the next to take up arms, and within the course of two years, from the time the patriots had taken into their head to form a combination against the planters, the whole of Bengal was up against them.

The Babus examined their accounts and found that the whole affair had cost them only seventeen thousand rupees, a large sum considering that they were only middle-class men, but ridiculously small when the gigantic results obtained were considered. They never made speeches, nor did the newspapers parade their good works. Their names are not even known, and this is the first time that we are induced to give publicity to their doings. Both of them have left descendants, but babu Digambar was ruined, and his son is not in comfortable circumstances now.

BRAHMIN AND A PLEBIAN

India owes more to England than she can ever repay, is a sentiment we found in the columns of an Anglo-Indian paper a few days ago. This is very well-known to the people of this country, and always acknowledged by them gratefully. Perhaps England also owes some obligations to the people of this country. They say in honest pride that, "we have generously given you education, good roads, railways, law courts and many other institutions." That is all true, but we shall here tell a nice story of a Brahmin and a plebeian, who met accidentally on their way to Calcutta. They accosted each other, and came to know that they were going in the same direction, for the same purpose, *viz.*, to Calcutta in search of employment. Says the Brahmin to the other: "Now, as you are a low-caste man and can only be a menial servant, you can be provided for at once. I will do it for you, be my servant, and I will make you a reasonable allowance." This was agreed to by the other.

The Brahmin had very dirty clothes on, while his servant had provided himself with clean pieces. Says the Brahmin again :—"Rama," (this was the name of his just-appointed servant) "this cannot

be. I, your master, to put on such dirty clothes and you to wear such clean and nice ones! This won't do. People will laugh at me, but that I don't care, but they will laugh at you. So let us exchange clothes." To this very reasonable request, Rama, of course, gave his assent. And they changed their clothes, and thus attired, they came at last to Calcutta.

The Brahmin rented a small hut, and asked Rama whether he had any money with him. "Yes, two rupees I brought from home for passage expenses," says Rama. "Well, give me these two rupees, we must provide for our immediate wants," says the Brahmin, "and besides, the landlord will have to be paid one rupee in advance." Of course, Rama could not object to this second, and still more reasonable, request.

Says the Brahmin again: "Now, Rama, you are servant, I am master. It is your duty to see that I may be put to no trouble. You must do all the work of the house. An indolent man never prospers in this world. Besides, to tell you the truth, I am a little strict. If I find you in fault, I will dismiss you immediately. Well, have you finished all the household work?" "Yes, Sir," says Rama. "Have you had a bellyful of rice?" asks the master. (Now, be it remembered, the marketing was made with Rama's money.) "Yes, Sir," replies Rama again. Then the Brahmin tells him,

"Now let me take my rest and afternoon nap, while you go to the streets to beg. Take care, don't loiter in the streets. I shall judge you by the amount you bring home."

Rama went to beg, and his master slept. In the evening, Rama came back with a good many annas in his pocket. His pocket was heavy with copper. Of course, all that Rama brought was taken by the master. Rama worked as a servant when at home and left it for begging every day. When he came home every evening, his master, of course, appropriated all his earnings. And, in this manner, after a couple of months, the Brahmin found a good many rupees in his box.

One day he had some private talk with his servant. "Rama," said he, "you must go home to my wife. I must make a remittance to her, for, she must be in want. I am sorry I can't send her much, for, you bring in a very small amount daily. And to tell you the truth, you are a very stupid servant. Indeed, I had intended to dismiss you, but I was loath to throw you adrift in the world. However, carry all this money that I have been able to scrape to my native village to-morrow. But stop. When you go, what will become of me? Besides, as I am sending home every pice I have, you must do one thing. Stop two days more, and do you beg from morn to midnight, so that you can leave me

provision for the few days that you will be absent.'

This was settled, and when Rama was going, he begged of his master his passage expenses. The master looked angrily at him. "Rama, you are getting to be a very expensive luxury, you heartless rogue. Do you mean that I should starve myself to provide you with passage expenses? A fine servant he who wants his passage expenses! You ass, beg your way to my home, and don't trouble me with your odious selfishness again. Don't forget that I am your *ma bap*, and had I not put you in the way, and had I not rented this house for you, you would have starved in the streets."

After providing the Brahmin with expenses for several days, Rama left Calcutta, and begged his way to the native village of the Brahmin He found out the house of his master, and handed over to his master's wife the money that he had brought.

After providing Rama with some refreshment, the excellent wife of the Brahmin asked him, "What is the nature of the service that your master has been able to secure so soon?" Rama said in reply: "Mother, no service in particular. I, as his servant, beg in the streets, from the proceeds of which this amount of money has been sent to you." The lady paused for a moment, and

said: "Then, I suppose, you go alone, and your master does not accompany you." "No, he does not" said Rama. "Then I suppose, when you come back, he takes of you an account of the number of houses you resorted to and the amount you received from each?" "No, that he does not," said Rama in reply. "Is it so?—said the lady in reply, "I always knew him to be a foolish, worthless careless and generous sort of man. He takes no account? I can guess, the generous fool will never prosper. It never strikes him that it is in your power to forget your obligations to him and conceal a portion of the day's earnings from him. His generosity will ruin him. But you, Rama, don't take advantage of it. You must never forget that you can never repay the debt you owe to your master."

It may be objected that the story is not quite appropriate, for, a large amount of capital came to the country from England. That is quite true, but the story is there; and it is too good to be lost and is hence put on record.

AN ORTHODOX GHOST STORY

It was bitter cold, for the month was January, and the weather very foul. The wife of a poor Brahmin was shivering in her hut, for she had no clothes to cover herself. She advised her husband who was sitting by her, that he should take up a piece of cord and hang himself, since he could not provide his wife with sufficient clothing to cover her body. The Brahmin took this remark of his wife very much to heart, made a deep resolve in his mind, and left home immediately, although it was a dark night and raining, and he had no clothing to protect himself against the biting cold. His wife thought that he left her in a huff and would soon return ; but he did not.

The Brahmin left the village, and entered a vast plain, in the middle of which there was a *beel* or marsh. He found that it was colder there than in the village, and that his limbs were getting benumbed. Indeed, he felt that he was losing all his strength, and had scarcely any to come back to his hut. In short, he felt that he would die in a few minutes, if he did not return.

At this critical moment he saw a blazing fire, which seemed to be burning on the brink of the *beel* referred to above. The sight revived his

courage, and he gave up his determination of seeking home again. He then dragged himself there with difficulty, and found that some men, as it were, were warming themselves before a large fire. The fire was in the centre, and the men sat around. It never occurred to him that a fire in a place like that, in spite of the rain that was falling, would be a strange affair. And stranger still would it be for mén to be warming themselves in a place, and at a time, like that. But in the condition in which the Brahmin was, all these ideas never occurred to him. He saw that there was no place for him to sit by the fireside, so he gave a slight push to one of those who were warming themselves, with a request to move a little and make room for him ; and then he let himself drop there. What he said when he gave the push was in colloquial Bengalee,—for he was a Bengalee and had to express himself in a few short words, as he had no strength for a long speech. What he said was only—*sar re bhai tapai*. By *tapai* the Brahmin meant, "let me warm myself." Now, *sar* means "movest," *re* means "thou," *bhai* means "brother," *tapai* means "let me warm myself." In other words what the Brahmin meant was this,—"movest thou, brother, let me warm myself."

The Brahmin thus seated himself before the fire, although he was in such a wretched plight

that he had not life enough to take note of his new acquaintances. But the heat of the blazing fire soon revived him. He also found just then that his new acquaintances were talking in whispers, and that about himself. The Brahmin now raised his head to take stock of the company in which circumstances had thrown him. To his horror he found that all his acquaintances had their feet turned backwards!

Now, in Europe, ghosts have hoofs instead of feet, but in India they have their feet no doubt, but with this difference that while human beings have their toes and feet in the front, the ghosts have theirs behind. Why European ghosts should have hoofs and their Indian brethren feet turned backwards,—is a problem which is not easy of solution. It has been established beyond doubt that the Europeans must pass through a few hundreds of births more before they could be as perfect specimens of humanity as the Indians are. In the same manner, it may be urged, that the ghosts of Europe belong to an undeveloped species, and that if they have hoofs now, in time, after a few hundred births more, they may get in their place human feet, though turned backwards, as the Indian ghosts have.

But to proceed with the story. When the Brahmin saw that all his acquaintances were a company of ghosts, every hair of his body stood

erect. He thought that he was lost ; and a feeling of faintness very naturally came over him. In his terror he began to invoke all the gods in the heavens to protect him from his dreadful companions; though, of course, for fear of offending them he was doing so in his heart, without their knowledge. Just then, he was roused by a question from one of the ghosts.

But here some preliminary explanations are necessary. When the Brahmin had given a push to a ghost to make room for himself, our readers would remember that, to give emphasis to his motion, he had uttered some words, one of which was *tapai*. Now, the ghost to whom he had given the push, unluckily or luckily, bore the name of "Tapai." The matter then stood thus : What the Brahmin meant was "movest, thou, brother, let me warm myself ;" but what the ghosts understood was that the Brahmin knew "Tapai", and hence he had called him by name, and asked him to move to make room for him (the Brahmin). In short, they understood that the Brahmin had only addressed an old acquaintance saying, " Movest thou, brother Tapai."

The ghosts wondered how the Brahmin could know the name of Tapai, who was a ghost and the Brahmin only a man ; so they held a conference in whispers. One wanted to know of Tapai himself, whether he and

the Brahmin were previously known to each other. But Tapai denied all knowledge of the Brahmin. They then all came to an agreement on this point, which was to ask the Brahmin himself direct, to explain how he had come to know the name of Tapai. So, while the Brahmin was at the point of falling down in a swoon from fright, he was addressed by Tapai himself. He said, "*Thakoor*, (Brahmin) how could you know that my name was Tapai?"

The question roused the Brahmin to a full consciousness of his dangerous position. In times of danger the mind works with rapidity. He was then in desperate circumstance and he found that he must act with promptitude to save himself. An idea entered his head and he wanted to put it into action. He did not give any direct reply to the question put to him, but he rose and caught hold of the hair of Tapai, and threateningly addressed him thus :—" Don't I know you, Tapai, you rascal? If you have fórgotten me, I have not forgotten you. Where is my three hundred rupees which you owed me? I demand instant payment. And if you do it not, I will make you longer by two cubits by a profuse beating of the shoe." Of course, the Brahmin had no shoes on, nor had he ever known what shoe-wearing was, but he used that expression, "shoe-beating", in order to frighten the ghosts.

Tapai, taken aback by this sudden attack, stammered out a reply to the effect that he never knew anything about the debt. "But, *Thakoor*", said he, "when did I borrow money from you?" The Brahmin had already framed the reply. He said: "Of course, it was not you who borrowed the money but your father, and if I can get hold of him I will teach him a lesson which he will never forget." The fact was, all the ghosts that were sitting there were young, and the Brahmin could see that Tapai's father was not among them.

When the Brahmin said that it was Tapai's father who had borrowed the money, they all said that Tapai's father was dead. This was another piece of good luck which the Brahmin thought of utilizing at once. He said, "And because your father is dead, am I, therefore, to lose my money? Is this the sense of justice of ghosts? Take that as an earnest," and down came the fist of the Brahmin upon the devoted back of poor Tapai. The Brahmin was strong,—desperation had made him stronger, and the blow fell upon the back of Tapai like a sledge hammer.

Now, if the ghosts had so minded, anyone of them could have trampled five hundred Brahmins like him under foot. But it must be borne in mind that ghosts are a stupid race; besides, everyone of them was quite young, none being older than 10 or 12. The real fact, however, was that the

attitude of the Brahmin confounded them and took away the little sense they possessed. The Brahmin was a great bully; everyone knows that in the *Kali-yug*, a bully, generally speaking, is always the master in every situation. When the Brahmin looked threateningly at the friends of Tapai, they feared, he might let go his victim and fall upon them. The oldest among them, however, muttered that there was no law that one should be murdered for his debts, far less for those that were contracted by his father.

The Brahmin smiled. He said, "Do you call this gentle touch of mine, murder? If Tapai's father had been here, you would have seen what a blow I always carry for my defaulting debtor. I am by nature a merciful man and, therefore, I am showing great consideration to Tapai, you ungrateful creatures. I am willing still to show some more favours to him. I will relinquish all my interest. Let him only pay the principal. But it must be paid cash down."

With this the Brahmin raised his hand, as if to inflict another blow for the purpose of giving emphasis to his proposition. The blow did not come, though Tapai shrieked in apprehension. The Brahmin was a lucky individual. Tapai was an orphan, and had no one but his maternal uncle, by name Banroo, who had exactly three hundred rupees, which he had kept concealed

underneath the roots of a palm tree. This fact was known to all the ghosts ; yet nobody dared to meddle with that sum. For Banroo was the most terrible and cruel of all the ghosts in the neighbourhood.

The ghosts held a secret consultation, and one of them proposed that Banroo's three hundred rupees should be paid to the Brahmin. To this proposal Tapai did not agree; he said that he would rather incur the wrath of the Brahmin than that of his uncle. But all the ghosts assured Tapai that as he was Banroo's nephew, and that as he was going to meddle with the amount only to save his life, they would all combine to protect him from the wrath of his uncle. The money was dug up, counted one by one, and paid to the Brahmin.

Here was, however, another difficulty; the Brahmin did not venture to let go the hold he had upon Tapai. His idea was that it would be dangerous to release Tapai, and then carry the money home, leaving the ghosts behind him to do all the mischief they could. So he said in an angry tone: "Am I to carry all this money home? Tapai, you must go with me with this bag." But Tapai was afraid to go alone, and so a few others were induced to accompany him. Thus the Brahmin with the lock of Tapai's hair in his hands, and the money bag on the latter's shoulders, accompanied

by half-a-dozen ghosts, returned to the village. The Brahmin thought that it would not be safe to show his house to the ghosts; besides, his poor hut would go very much against his pretension of being a money-lender. So, he pointed out the house of another Brahmin instead of his own—of one who was comparatively in better circumstances,—took the bag in his hands and dismissed the ghosts; and they fled precipitately without looking behind. The Brahmin entered his hut, threw the bag of money before his wife and declared, "See, you wretch, whether your husband is worth anything or not."

Banroo, who had gone on an errand to the South Pole, came home a few days after the incident described above. The first thing he did on his arrival was to take a peep at his buried treasure. Seeing his mony gone, he flew into a fit of ungovernable passion, and uprooted the palm tree in his fury, with his pair of horns, for he had two of them,—short and well-pointed.

Here parenthetically let us remark, that all ghosts have not horns. A few have, but the majority are without them. In this manner some have their tails, others three legs, and some, though they have legs, do not walk with them but on their heads. It is also said that some have the shape of a dome, while others eat with their eyes, having no mouth. But it is a herculean

task to describe the peculiarities of the race of ghosts.

Banroo then went straight to kill his nephew. But others came to the latter's rescue. In short, everything was fully explained to him. When Banroo had heard everything he burst into a loud fit of laughter, which sounded like the howl of a hyena. People in the nearest village thought that it was a hyena that was laughing, but it was Banroo. Said he, "I have heard that laughter sometimes follows great misery. I cannot help laughing at my own misery. And fools, did it never occur to you that the Brahmin was only a man that ghosts never borrow money of men, and that you could have killed him then and there?"

The oldest amongst them replied, "We know that you have great courage, but it would have oozed out before the blows of the Brahmin. If you were there, you would have, of your own accord, paid the money to appease his wrath. If we are ghosts, he is an—arch-ghost."

Banroo said, "Stop fools I must recover the money and also teach the Brahmin a lesson. He must know what it is to meddle with us ghosts. But you must point out to me the house."

All the ghosts, however, declined; they apprehended another attack from the Brahmin. Banroo then caught his nephew by the neck, and told him that he must either pay him the money,

or point out to him the house of the Brahmin. Tapai found that he must go; so he accompanied his uncle, pointed out to him the house of the Brahmin from a distance, and fled. Of course, it need not be explained here that the house he pointed out was not that of the hero of this tale, but of the other and wealthier Brahmin of the village.

It was at about 9 o'clock at night when Banroo reached the house of the Brahmin. There was big, bushy tamarind tree by the wall which surrounded the house, and he took his seat upon a projecting branch thereof, watching his opportunity and the course of events. The owner of the house was an old Brahmin, who had a young son. He had a cow which was missing and which was named "Benre," because it had somehow lost its tail. Brahmin junior, after dinner, came out of the house to wash himself. He had no notion that a terrible ghost was sitting close by, and fiercely and threateningly looking at him from the projecting branch of the tamarind tree, on which he was perched. While washing himself, the young Brahmin saw before him the missing cow "Benre." In the delight of his heart he called aloud to his father: "Papa," said he, "Banroo is come." Now, it must be borne in mind that the name of the cow was "Benre" and not Banroo; but it was called "Banroo" in a tone of banter. Benre, the cow, was

called Banroo to express indignation at her truant conduct.

The young Brahmin said, "Papa, Banroo is at last come." No sooner had he uttered it than Banroo, the ghost, started. He muttered to himself, "How could he know that I am here?" But the young Brahmin continued,—"Banroo, I was expecting you. So you are come just in time." Banroo in the tree felt very uncomfortable. He thought that this was very queer, and the strangeness of his position gave him a good deal of uneasiness. But the young Brahmin continued, "Banroo, I have this time provided myself with a strong piece of cord for the benefit of your fine horns." Banroo began to move backward slowly, to make his presence still more unknown if possible. But the young Brahmin went on to say, "Papa, Banroo is restless and he means flight. Fetch me that new piece of cord so that I can secure him at once." Banroo felt his horns with his two hands, and he thought that he would never permit the cord to be put round them. He now began to retreat rather rapidly. Just then the cow was leaving the place. So the young Brahmin said, "Papa, be quick with the cord, Banroo is escaping my hands." The old Brahmin thereupon threw a piece of cord from the house and the young Brahmin ran to fetch it. But Banroo the ghost was not to lose this opportunity; he could

bear it no longer. By a big ghostly jump he reached the ground from the high branch where he had been perching, and fled with a loud shriek towards his haunt. The villagers thought that it was only the howl of a jackal; but no, it was of Banroo.

THE STORY OF A LUNATIC

ONE-HALF of the world thinks the other half mad; but there is no harm in this argument, for the halves are equally matched. If the man of the world laughs at a pious man, the pious man also weeps over the wretched condition of the worldly man. If what pious men say be true that there is an after world and men there will have to give an account of their wicked deeds, then most of the greatest men of the human species are mad men no doubt.

But the matter assumes a quite different aspect when a so-called mad man is in a minority in a combat with another so-called lunatic; for, the other party, who thinks him mad, being the stronger, overpowers his opponent, and puts him into a lunatic asylum. Kristo Sarkar, whose story we were just going to relate, was thus overpowered by a stronger party, and kept in the Dullanda Lunatic Asylum for eight months, and is being sent there again as a lunatic.

Kristo Sarkar is now on bail; and, on the expiry of its term, he will, under the orders of the Bengal Government, be again put into the Lunatic Asylum at Dullanda. Fancy the arrangement of setting a lunatic at liberty on bail! He has only a

few days of liberty before him, and after that he will be incarcerated during the term of his life. And Kristo Sarkar takes advantage of the few days he has before him to run down to Calcutta and see what he can do to escape from his doom.

Kristo Sarkar, who will be sent to the lunatic asylum on the ground of his being a dangerous maniac, however, sits before us, and relates his own story. Of course, he has given bail and he cannot offer any violence upon us without forfeiting his bond. The authorities, who let loose this dangerous lunatic in society, know very well that he being bound hand and foot by his bond, would not be able to do harm, and so he is allowed to come out of the asylum only for some weeks. But to proceed with his story, he says that he was accused of having killed an old woman by biting her cheek. He was hauled up on a charge of culpable homicide ; but the Civil Surgeon gave him a certificate that he was a dangerous lunatic, and, on that ground, he was acquitted. The Magistrate who tried the case reported the matter to Government, and the Government have ordered the authorities to send him up to the lunatic asylum.

Kristo Sarkar has all the papers of his case with him, and he shows us the judgment of the Magistrate which runs as follows :—

"The evidence for the prosecution leaves no-doubt that Kristo Sarkar bit the sick and bed-ridden old woman Bidhu Dassi, in the cheek, and thereby accelerated her death. The act was done in a fit of insanity and would have amounted to grievous hurt if Kristo Sarkar had been sane. Kristo Sarkar is acquitted on the ground of insanity. The case will be reported for orders of the Government in due course."

The dangerous maniac then shows to us the report of the Surgeon who made the *post mortem* examination, on the body of the old woman, and we extract the following from it:—

"The probable cause of death was extensive hemorrhage of the skin in various parts of the body, effusion in the brain, discharge of blood from the lacerated wound in the lip coupled with a bad state of health. *I did not see any mark of teeth in the lacerated wound.* The deceased must have received blows on the ribs and on her head. The third and fourth ribs of the left side, and the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th ribs of the right side broken."

Kristo Sarkar draws our attention to the above, and tells us, "Now see, sir, who is the mad man, I or the Magistrate? I am accused of having bitten the woman with my teeth, the result of which was that there were no marks of teeth on the person of the dead woman, but her ribs were broken! Now, sir, you have a world-wide celebrity

for being an impartial, just, frank, out-spoken man. Tell me, sir, I repeat, whether I or the Magistrate is the mad man."

Now, this was a most difficult and delicate question to answer. It appeared to us that reason was on the side of th ealleged lunatic, but he was in the minority. To side with him would be altogether a risky business, so what we did was not to give any reply to his question, but we asked him to proceed with his story. He then said : "Perhaps, sir, you are not decided, but I shall at once settle the question for you," and he opened his mouth and showed us that his lower jaw was devoid of nearly half-a-dozen teeth! "Now, sir," continued he, "how could a man manage to bite with one set of teeth? The Magistrate, however, adjudges that I did perform that impossible feat. Now, give me, sir, I entreat you, your frank opinion, who is the really mad man—he or I?"

We told him, "Do not, please, press us for an answer. Either you or the Hakim who tried you must be mad, and in going to decide the question,—who is really the mad man,—we may ourselves lose the balance of our head. You are leading us to dangerous ground, so, please, go on with your story." Thereupon he stopped, and handed over to us a copy of the deposition of Dr. Henry Purves, the Civil Surgeon of Burdwan,

entreating us to read it carefully. We did it, and for the edification of our readers, we insert it below :—

" I have examined the man, Kristo Sarkar, now in the Burdwan Jail, on a charge of culpable homicide. It appears to me, from what I have learned of his history and what I have seen of him, that he is a dangerous lunatic and that he is unfit at present to stand his trial. Though he apparently gives rational answers to questions put to him, I believe, he is incapable of entering on his defence. He shows a good deal of cunning when being questioned and that makes him more dangerous. I think he ought to be detained in a Lunatic Asylum for observation and safe custody."

When we had finished reading the deposition of the Civil Surgeon, Kristo Sarkar said, "The Doctor Saheb put me down for a mad man because I gave rational answers. It seems the Doctor Saheb's idea of a sane man is that he must talk incoherently. Then I am, according to him, not only mad, but 'dangerous'; dangerous because I showed some 'cunning,' in giving my answers. The fact is, when I was put upon my examination, I tried my best to give intelligent answers, because I felt that it was within the power of the Doctor either to procure my release, or to send me to the Lunatic Asylum. The resul is, that my sanity convinced the Doctor of my

insanity, and now I am to pass my days in the Lunatic Asylum because I gave rational and cunning answers!"

For ourselves we must tell what we felt on the occasion. We have heard of sane men feigning insanity, successfully rarely, unsuccessfully generally, but we have never heard of a lunatic feigning sanity and so successfully. Kristo Sarkar is feigning sanity, he is doing it with complete success, and he is a psychological phenomenon, the possibility of which was never admitted before.

Kristo Sarkar thus related how he fared in the Lunatic Asylum. He said that the life he led there was horrible indeed, and he wonders that he did not turn mad though he was eight months there. He said, "I prefer a hundred deaths to the life I led in the Lunatic Asylum. Now just conceive my position. I was sourrounded on all sides by mad men. Though a perfectly sane man, more sane perhaps than the Civil Surgeon of Burdwan and the Magistrate who tried me, yet I was doomed to pass my time with companions who were most of them raving maniacs. I had nobody to talk to but these men bereft of sense. Some of them took a delight in thrashing me. One day a violent lunatic had nearly killed me. Almost not a day passed without my receiving some sort of ill-treatment at their hands. In short, I was constantly in dread of

them, and my life was completely at their mercy.

"At night I had to sleep in the same room with these lunatics. Fortunately, my night companions were not of a violent temper. But yet their strange hallucinations produced an indescribable feeling in me. I really began to be affected by them, and sometimes doubts arose in my mind whether I was really a mad man or not. Then my thoughts ran to my persecutors, to the Zemindar, the Civil Surgeon and the Magistrate who had been the cause of my incarceration, and I called upon Heaven to forgive them for the miseries which I owed to them. Indeed, sir, can you tell me, why these man should combine against me, and subject me to the sufferings of hell on earth? I do not remember to have done any the least harm to them." The man was evidently a very pious Vaishnava.

Here the poor man turned serious, his eyes moistening with tears, and the sight of his woebegone face would have perhaps melted a hard stone. He then said he was made to work from morning till 5-30 P.M., in the evening, constantly, getting only one hour's respite for dinner. He saw how the lunatics were thrashed by their guards for refusing to do work, and he therefore never neglected the task allotted to him. But it was too much for him, he said, to work for 11 or

12 hours daily. "A heart of burden," remarked he, "breaks down if thus worked." He was fed upon unhusked rice and a little vegetable, cooked in the most abominable fashion imaginable. The other lunatics had mutton every other day, but being a Vaishnava, unused to take meat, he never touched it. What pained him the most was the fact that he was compelled to eat his food often polluted by the touch of lunatics, who were either low caste men, or Mahomedans.

But it would not have matters much if Kristo Sarkar's sufferings were at an end, but as we said he is again going to be put into the asylum. This time it is not the Magistrate or Dr. Purves, who sends him there, but the Government of Bengal. Indeed, the Magistrate, in his report to the Government, acknowledges that, since Kristo Sarkar's return from the asylum he is " apparently perfectly sane", and "he ought not to be detained in an asylum." The Civil Surgeon of Burdwan does not see "the wild stare" which he used to mark in him whilst he was in the Burdwan jail. The wife of Kristo Sarkar also petitioned the Lieutenant-Governor, alleging that her husband was never a lunatic, and that it was through the machinations of his enemies that he had been placed in the unfortunate position he was. But all these appear to have gone for nothing, and the order comes from the Lieutenant-Governor that

he should be again locked up in the Lunatic Asylum!

We do not blame the Lieutenant-Governor: he is not acquainted with the circumstances of the case, and has been guided by routine merely. But he ought to have taken into consideration the remarks of the Magistrate who considers Kristo Sarkar to be now apparently sane, and that of the Civil Surgeon who says that he has no longer that mad stare. Indeed, with these facts and recommendations before His Honour, Kristo Sarkar should not be sent to the Lunatic Asylum again without a previous medical examination by thoroughly competent persons, by persons who will not put him down for a mad man by reason of giving rational answers.*

* Let it be noted here that agitation in the press had its effect and the alleged lunatic was released.

THE RAILWAY PLATFORM

BHAWANEE BABU was attentively turning over the pages of the *Gazette* when he suddenly came cross a most important Notification, announcing the date and hour of the departure of Lord Lytton from Calcutta. Bhawanee Babu, being a little nervous, was deeply moved, and it took him some time to recover from the shock the announcement had given him. When his perturbed spirit was a little calmed, he hastily summoned his Dewan, who had his office downstairs. The Dewan heard the summons, and hurriedly presented himself before his lord, with a pen stuck in his ear and a bunch of keys in his left hand. "Well, Dewanjee," says Bhawanee Babu, "the Burra Lat Shaheb goes away from Calcutta seven days hence, you know I must bid him farewell at the Rationalist way."

Dewan.—Certainly, that you must do, Huzoor. Has the Burra Shaheb written to you about it?

Bhawanee Babu.—Well, yes and no. It is true he has not written to me direct, but he has intimated it in such a manner as I may know it. Don't you see it would be invidious to write to me direct?

Dewan.—Certainly, Huzoor. Directly or indir-

ectly, it matters not. It is clear that it is His Excellency's wish that you should be present.

B. Babu.—Of course. If I don't go, what will the Burra Shaheb think? What will other Shahebs think? What will the public think? I, who have never failed in the performance of this sacred and solemn duty for the last twelve years, cannot stay in my parlour, when the Burra Shaheb himself is going away. Ask the family priest to make *hom* every day and to offer some thousands of *toolsee* leaves to the *Thakur* for my success on that day. I will not forget the date and the hour; yet let it be recorded, and do remind me of it every day twice. Let the horses be well fed and taken care of and the big phaeton kept clean. What are these horses and phaetons for, if not to carry, me to the Railway platform on such great occasions? I hope, Ramanee Babu will get no intimation. I say this from a pure feeling of friendship for him; the last time, on a similar occasion, he made himself the laughing stock of all present by his awkward manner.

The Dewan carried out the orders of his master, and the eventful day arrived at last. The phaeton was in attendance, Bhawanee Babu was richly and gaudily dressed, his dependants all stood beside him, and the family priest came with his offerings. The priest blessed him, bells were rung, conches blown, and the ladies filled the house

with the joyful peal of *ulu*. Solemnly and sedately, Bhawanee Babu advanced towards his carriage, there was another joyful and louder peal of *ulu*, and the big phaeton rattled along the narrow street towards the Howrah Railway Station.

Bhawanee Babu was punctual, that is to say, he arrived only two hours before the time. He alighted from his carriage, but his dismay knew no bounds when he saw that Ramanee Babu was already there, as richly dressed as himself. There was a cloud in the face of both, and they savagely glared at each other for a moment; but, by superhuman effort they mastered their feelings and cordially grasped each other's hands. "What brings you so early, Ramanee Babu?"—Asks Bhawanee Babu, still hoping against hope that his friend perhaps knew nothing about the departure affair, but was only going to Chandernagar or Burdwan. But Ramanee Babu was equal to the occasion, and replied to the query by a specimen of his wit. "What brings you here, Bhawanee Babu?" They laughed, and Bhawanee Babu was meditating another attack when others arrived. Some came alone, some in pairs, but each with a peculiar head-dress. The Railway platform was soon filled with a sea of turbans of various shapes and hues. And Bhawanee Babu was lost in the crowd.

Burra Shaheb comes at last and there is a rush

towards his carriage; one, whose head is too small for his turban, finds it under the feet of half-a-dozen of eager farewell-givers and trampled and for ever damaged. Another finds his trail suddenly caught from behind as if by a vice; he looks behind and finds that his neighbour behind him was standing upon it. It is not on record that anybody was trampled to death on that occasion, but it is on record that many lost their valuable turbans and damaged their valuable dresses, and all received pushes, lateral and horizontal, from behind and from before, during those eventful moments, when the crowd rushed towards the carriage of the big man.

The Burra Shaheb alighted from his carriage, and that event was followed by numberless salaams from the assembled guests or hosts, call them whichever you like. The big man proceeded on straight without looking to the right or left, and a passage was immediately made for him. On the platform he accosted one or two men who stood close by, though there were hundreds before him ready to accost him and to be accosted in return. But the big man had only come three minutes before time, and he had, therefore, no time, even if he had the inclination, of addressing and receiving the salute of each. The assembly stood before him with their hearts beating, anxious to catch one glance of the big

man. But no response came from him, and the assembled guests were not even sure whether the big man was at all aware of their presence.

Bhawanee Babu was standing behind. There was a thick phalanx before him, and he was trying every posture to have a peep at the Viceroy. It so happened, however, that just before entering the car, the big man took a survey of the throng from one end to the other. His glance gradually, though with the rapidity of the lightning, came towards the spot where Bhawanee Babu was standing. That was the proudest moment in the life of Bhawanee Babu. He was not slow to take advantage of it. Like the pendulum of a clock from which the ball had been removed, or more appropriately, like the wing of the humming bee, the hands of Bhawanee Babu began to move rapidly, so that he managed twenty-five salaams in a second. But, alas! for Bhawanee Babu, he could not detain that big man's glance even for a second; and long before he had finished his salaams, the glance had left him far behind and encountered others, who were doing precisely what he had begun a little before. Readers, have you ever seen an *oolloo* field? Well, when a strong gale passes over it, the grass, as the wind touches it, bends down, and continues to move for a time even when the gale has left it. Thus the Railway platform was like a *oolloo* field, and

the guests were like *oolloos*, and the glance like a strong gale, and the metaphor complete.

The Viceroy proceeded towards Simla, and Bhawanee Babu came home. His servants and dependants had already assembled at the gate to receive him; and the ladies, his wife and daughters, were peeping through the lattice, eager to learn his success. Bhawanee Babu alighted from his carriage, and his servants almost carried him upstairs, where he was undressed, fanned, shampooed, and tended as a delicate infant. The Dewan, after the lapse of half-an-hour, at last ventured to enquire about the result of his meeting with the Lord Shaheb. Now, Bhawanee Babu was a tender-hearted soul, incapable of giving pain to any one. He knew, if he told the bare truth, it would deeply disappoint his friends. He had, therefore, to tell them some lies. He had been building airy castles while proceeding towards the Railway platform, how the Viceroy would receive him, talk to him without taking any notice of Ramanee Babu. etc., etc., Now, poor soul! his airy castles had been all dashed to the ground. "I had a hot time of it, Dewanjee," said the Babu, with a bold face. "There was an exchange of sharp words between myself and His Excellency."

Dewan.—Sharp words! I hope, His Excellency was not offended.

B. Babu.—Ah! no. He was in a gay humour, so was I. His Excellency saw me, and said to me, "I am much obliged to you, Bhawanee Babu, for this attention," while shaking hands with me. I told him in reply, "My Lord, I am the most loyalest subject of Her Most August, September, November and Gracious Majesty. It is my most serious, and solemn, and sacred duty to be present on such occasions." You know, when my tongue is once unloosened, I can make a very good speech. His Excellency was mightily pleased.

Dewan.—But what about sharp words?

B. Babu.—Oh, I forget. I told his Lordship that "the British Government with its Zulu War, Bengal Bank, and Post Office was a very good Government, but it was not particularly discriminate in offering titles of honour. People who were nobodies were honoured, while men of ancient families were neglected. You see, Dewanjee, I gave him a hint, a broad hint. But, poor Ramanee was standing aloof alone, unnoticed, in the crowd. I don't know who wanted him there.

But while Bhawanee Babu was relating his adventures to his friends and relations, Ramanee Babu was doing the same to his, not forgetting his particular friend Bhawanee Babu, in the relation of his adventures

BEHARI SARDAR.

CHAPTER I

BEHARI SARDAR was the leader of a band of dacoits in the village of Palua, north of Magura (Amritabazar), in the district of Jessore. It was at a time when practically there was no Government in the country. The English had taken possession of Bengal, but they had not been able to bring the affairs of the country under control. They had destroyed the influence and privileges of the Zemindars, who exercised both judicial and executive powers, but had not been able to supply their place. The English rulers, few in number, resided in towns, the villagers had everything in their own way, and thus dacoits sprang up on all sides. Behari Sardar was one of them.

Not that Behari Sardar was a dacoit in the proper sense of the term, for he rarely committed midnight robberies. He was a dacoit in the same sense as Tipu, Sivaji, Alexander the Great, not to mention the name of Clive, were dacoits. Indeed, he rarely committed what is properly called robberies. What he did was to punish recusant subjects, for he claimed a tract of land for his territory, and the people inhabiting that tract for his subjects. What his subjects thought of his arrangement,

Behari did not take into consideration, so long as he knew that he was able to exact allegiance.

Now, in this matter, we can not blame Behari Sardar, for he only adopted a common practice followed all over the world, in the West as well as in the East. It is quite true, his right upon his so-called territory was not founded upon any moral basis. But what of that? What is the basis of the Portuguese rights in Africa, and the rights of that great moral nation, the English, too, in that continent? We fully admit that Behari Sardar had no moral right to the territory he owned. But there is no doubt that his right was founded upon a better moral basis than that of big nations, as for instance, of the Russians, who claim sovereignty in foreign countries.

Behari Sardar owned a territory, which was 14 *cose* or 28 miles in length, and 8 *cose* or 16 miles in breadth. He was monarch within this tract. There were other dacoits who ruled other tracts in the same way as Behari Sardar did his own. He imposed contributions, but only upon the wealtheir portion of his subjects. In this, his example might be followed by the enlightened Government of India, which imposes all its taxes, except the Income-tax, upon the poor. Sometimes his subjects defied his authority and refused contributions. And then followed speedy punishment. Sometimes villagers combined to resist his

authority, and then there was a regular fight. Some were killed and a good many wounded. The dacoit band, if worsted, fled; and if victorious they pillaged the villages and subjected the wealthy villagers to horrible cruelties.

We remember an instance in which eighteen dacoits were killed in a village, (the name of which we just now forget) in the Nuddea district. We had the account from a fisherman who took part in the affray. He was about 105 years old when he told us the story, and though he was almost blind and deaf, the remembrance of the event sent a glow of enthusiasm to his cheeks.

He said that his village had resisted the demand of the dacoit leader, and prepared itself for fight. The fact must not be forgotten, that in those days all men trained themselves to the use of arms. Every village had a gymnasium; and every man, rich or poor, had his arms. Some few had match-locks, but the weapons in general use were bows and arrows, swords, spears, and lathies.

The fisherman said that his village was full of people of his caste, and it had also a wealthy fisherman who was at the head of the village. The village had about 75 to 80 combatants, and all these kept watch day and night. Information at last came that the dacoits were coming to the village, and immediately the females were removed to a secure place, and the house of the wealthy

fisherman was deserted. The old man said that he had 15 gold mohurs which he concealed in his waist-belt, and then joined the defenders with a fisherman's spear. The dacoits numbering about a hundred, rushed with the war—whoop of "Jay Kalee," and entered the court-yard (now deserted) of the wealthy fisherman.

But the fisherman had devised a novel way of defence. They had big fishing-nets which had been joined together, and they enclosed the dacoits with them. The enemy was thus easily over-powered, and fled in all directions, but yet eighteen of them, who had been hopelessly entangled in the meshes of the net, were killed.

One instance will shew how Behari selected his recruits. One morning, Behari Sardar was sitting on a stool in front of his house, and smoking. There was a sword by his side, and a mug of water before him. A young man presented himself and made his salam. The Sardar asked the visitor his business. The young man said that his name was Selim; that he had come to be enlisted under his banner; that he was 22, was not married, and had only his mother and no father.

The Sardar gazed at the powerful physique of the recruit with admiration, and then asked him to come near and sit by him. Selim sat before the stool. The Sardar took hold of the

right arm of Selim, and began to examine his muscles. He then examined his chest, neck, waist and thighs. The examination over, he murmured his approval. He then looked full into the face of Selim, and his brow darkened.

"You will not do, Selim," said the Sardar.

"And why, Huzoor?" asked Selim.

The Sardar said: "You have an effiminate look. Ours is a hard life and we need more determination than you seem to possess."

Selim was disappointed, he persisted that he had it, and would willingly give proofs of it.

"Would you?" asked the Sardar; and seeing a bull grazing close by he asked Selim to take the sword which was lying by, and cut off its head. "Go, Selim," said he. "Take this sword, cut off the head of the bull with one blow, and let us see the prowess of your arms."

Selim demurred. He said, he thought he could sever the neck of the bull with one blow, but then he would prefer to show the power of his muscles in other ways. He thought, it would not only be cruel but unmanly to kill an animal which had done him no harm.

The Sardar smiled. The Sardar saw one of his men, by name Kalu, within hail, and made a sign to him to approach. Kalu, who had not heard the conversation between the Sardar and Selim, approached and salamed his leader. The

Sardar said to Kalu: "Take this sword and cut off the head of yon bull by one blow, if possible, and bring it here."

Kalu uttered not a word, but took the sword, and in the course of a few seconds, accomplished all that he was told to do by his leader.

The Sardar said: "Selim, go home and marry. You will make a good husband. We cannot admit into our company men of sentiments."

The writer heard the above story from his grandfather who was then about seventy five and who had seen Behari Sardar.

Behari, though he had to contend with peaceful villagers of Bengal, had not yet everything in his own way. The circumstances which made him a dacoit, also led the villagers to devise means for their protection. The villages were then more populous than now. The great famine of the last century had desolated the country, and repentant Nature had hastily made up for the depredations that she had committed in her fury. The country, which had been desolated, was soon after filled with men and grain, and cattle. Peasants, after the famine was over, began to gather, year after year, bumper harvests: disease disappeared from the land; and people continued to multiply fast. In these days it is difficult to find a family of eight brothers; but it was a common

occurrence then. Some had seven, some ten, some a dozen, and there was scarcely any who had not at least four brothers. Children never died then as they do now, and the number of widows was very small.

This increasing population was maintained by the paddy that the villagers grew, and the numerous herds of cattle that they kept. Every village grew its own paddy, its sugar-cane or date, and its cotton, and preserved a wide extent of pasture land for its cattle. In those days, there was no urgent necessity to dispose of the surplus grain for silver, at whatever cost. If they had paddy, they cared not whether they had silver or not. They had their weavers, smiths, potters, carpenters, washermen, &c. They had no business to go elsewhere for their needs. It was salt which gave them some trouble, but they managed it somehow or other. At least, it has never been alleged that the people had ever suffered from a salt-famine.

It was the landlords who controlled the foreign affairs of the villages' the villagers generally managing the domestic affairs themselves. For instance, when two villages quarrelled over the boundary of pasture or paddy lands, the zemindar was asked to intervene and settle the dispute. The landlords exercised executive and judicial powers, whenever they were required to do it.

But they had very little to do in these directions. The villagers themselves defended the villages, and adjusted their differences. They only sought the protection of the landlords when they could not help themselves. For instance, the villagers generally defended themselves from the depredations of dacoits, and sometimes the latter proved too powerful, and then the landlord had to send his *paiks* to help his subjects. The dacoits could never cope with the villagers strengthened by such allies.

Then was the time when the Government of the British had reduced the landlords to great distress, but had not yet been able to supply their place. Hence dacoity flourished. Previously, the villagers kept the dacoit bands in check with the help of the landlords. But now they found, that they would henceforth be required to rely upon their own resources for the defence of their hearth and home.

Thus, the peaceful villagers found it necessary to learn to fight, to defend their property and persons from the dacoits. They had very few guns, and those they had were matchlocks, short-barrelled, massive things, very good to kill an elephant or a buffalo, but not good for the purpose of fighting with an active foe. The weapons in general use were, therefore, bows and arrows, swords, spears and bamboo clubs. The

best archer was considered stronger than a good many swordsmen.

The dacoits, however, had one advantage over the villagers. Being always the attacking party, they could choose the time of attack. Thus strongly armed villagers would find that the dacoits were too agile for them. The dacoits would swoop with the rapidity of lightning, loot a few houses, and fly before the villagers had time to assemble for the purposes of defence. The villagers had thus to maintain watch day and night, which kept them constantly in a state of alarm.

All this had the effect of making the villagers hardy, bold and enterprising. Indeed, in those days, the Bengalees had to fight constantly in defence of their hearth and home. One can understand the effect of such a mode of life upon their muscles and nerves. But yet the villagers were domestic folk. They had to maintain their old parents, wives, widowed relations, younger brothers and sisters, and little children. The dacoits, on the contrary, had nothing to restrain them. Before enlistment, they had to give up, under the rules which guided them, their religion and caste, father and mother, and cut off every other tie. Mussalman and Hindu dacoits had to eat together, and every one had to bow before their presiding deity, the Goddess Kalee. The domestic

villagers had thus to yield at last to the wild bands of dacoits. In this manner, Behari Sardar had acquired his territory.

The villagers, tired of constant watching and of the losses they sustained from the robberies which they could not altogether put a stop to, found it to their interest to come to some sort of terms with the dacoits. Every village agreed to pay a monthly contribution to the dacoits who held sway over it, and who, in their turn, protected the village from thefts and robberies, and outside foes.

Behari Sardar was a superior personage. While a young man, he had served under the banner of Mullook Maidan. A village had defied the authority of the latter Sardar, and made extensive preparations for the purposes of defence. They had prepared a bamboo fort, which they considered impregnable. Of course, it was not strong enough to resist artillery, but the dacoits were only armed with swords and spears. There was one door leading to this fort, and in cases of alarm the villagers took shelter here.

The village was, however, not withstanding its impregnable fort, attacked by Mullook Maidan one night. For he had been defied, and he had either to bring it under subjugation or to lose his prestige. The villagers, who kept watch day and night, got intimation of his approach and fled into

the strong bamboo enclosure, with their women and children. The defenders, armed to the teeth, stood to defend the bamboo ramparts, with courage and determination. The fort was inaccessible from other points—it could be only reached through the one gate which was, therefore, the main object of attack to the dacoits. The door could be reached through a narrow lane made of bamboo walls. The villagers stood with spears to defend this lane.

The dacoits made several attempts for an entry into this lane, but in vain. Bristling spears from both sides of this narrow lane defended the passage. It would be sure death to the man who ventured to enter, indeed, he would be pierced by the spears from both sides of the lane. The dacoits, after sustaining many casualties, had to give up the attempt, when Behari Sardar comdemned such pusilanimous conduct, and promised to go himself! He was asked by the leader to desist from the mad attempt, but he did not listen to such counsel. The dacoits had, most of them, a thick piece of cloth wrapped round their bodies to protect themselves from spears and arrows. Behari, with this protection only, and a couple of swords rushed forward with the war-whoop of Jay Kalee!

Whether it was the herculean figure of the man, or his unearthly war-whoop, or his recklessness, certain it is that the villagers could not touch

him, though he was sought to be pierced by hundreds of men from both sides of the lane. And thus Behari became Sardar.

One day, at about eight o'clock in the morning, Behari Sardar came to the village, nay, to the house of the writer's grandfather. The village is Magura (Amritabazar) which adjoins Palua, where Behari had established his head-quarters. The grandfather of the writer of this was then quite a young boy. Behari came with about two dozens of his followers, all of powerful make and fully armed. They had the usual thick cloth wrapped round their bodies, swords which dangled by their backs, and long lances in their right hands. Behari Sardar was received with great honour; a mat was spread for his followers; and he was given a big stool for a seat. Villagers all assembled to make their *salam*, and ladies also tried to have a peep at the great Sardar from their hiding places,—that Sardar, the mention of whose dreaded name had the effect of throwing them into hysteric fits. Behari returned the salutes with great cordiality. "Come, Bhai Saheb," said he to one. "Chacha, have you forgotton me?" to another. Indeed, he was well known to the village, and the villagers knew him well. After a good smoke, Behari began to explain the object of his visit.

He said: "I do not know reading and writing;

I am a dunce. But I have sense enough to know that it is my interest to live in peace with my co-villagers. For, I consider Palua and Magura to be one village. For my subsistence, it is true, I take something from you. But have I or my men even molested you? Have I not protected your village from dacoits and thieves? The other day I recovered the cow which had been stolen from this village, and carried to near Kotechandpur, 20 miles hence. What have you to complain against me that the lad Ameer Sheikh should quarrel with me? I appeal to you, *Bhadraloges* (gentlemen), to bring him to his senses. For, if he persists in his opposition, he will come to know, to-day or to-morrow, that Behari Sardar's sword is four cubits long."

A little explanation is here necessary. The lad Ameer Sheikh was a young man of about twenty-two, inhabiting the northern part of Magura. He had defied the authority of the Sardar. His strength lay in his bow and arrows, for he was reputed to be the best archer in the world!

The village was inhabited by Hindus and Mussalmans. The most respected of the villagers, a Hindu, replied that Ameer Sheikh was not amenable to reason, as he was an independent man. He had his landed property and his tenants. "But," said he, "Ameer is a dunce and a boor.

Nothing but punishment, I fear, will bring him to his senses." "So, Sardar Saheb," continued he, "don't you think that we have anything to do with it. We are quite happy under your strength of arms. We sleep with our doors open ; and as for the contribution, it is a trifle compared with the advantages we enjoy under your protection."

Said Behari:—"I know you are friends, or else I would not have come to you. Tell Ameer, however, that he and I shall soon meet, in spite of his charmed bow and obedient arrows."

The fact was, this Ameer was a thorn in the side of the Sardar. He was a too contemptible foe, with his slim figure, peasant following, and the burden of a family. But his shafts were formidable. The belief had obtained firm root in the minds of the Sardar's followers, and perhaps of the Sardar himself, though he did not like to acknowledge it, that he had brought under his subjugation an evil spirit which sat at the point of his arrows. Bow and arrow in hand, Ameer was unapproachable even by Behari Sardar. Ameer residing within two miles of the camp of the Sardar, thus continued to defy his authority. How could the Sardar brook such an insult? And how could he rule his territory with such a rebellious subject, making fun of his four-cubit long sword? He felt something like what was done by Lord

Lytton when the "wasps" of the Bengalee papers began to torment him.

Ameer was the eldest of the three brothers in the Sheikh family who lived jointly, in the same house. Ameer, not-withstanding his youth and his "charmed" bow, knew very well that he had committed an extremely rash act by courting the animosity of the great Sardar. Any man now would think that it was extremely foolish on the part of the villagers to defy the authority of the dacoits, and excite their wrath But people of this generation, with a ceaseless struggle for existence which civilization has imported ; with a passion for Government service which corrodes the system ; with their efforts to master a foreign tongue and pass examinations in that language ; with interminable litigation ; with spleen and dyspepsia ; and with being surrounded on all sides by police constables and spiteful neighbours, will never be able to appreciate the feelings which move healthy, free and strong men, with a full stomach, with no cares, and with no courts, to control their actions. How could Ameer help throwing down the gauntlet to the Sardar? The exuberant and bouyant spirit within him urged him to do so ; his followers urged him ; and public opinion pushed him forward.

Ameer knew that it would be extremely

imprudent to provoke the ire of the Sardar, but there was no help for it now. His pride would not permit him to stoop and sue for pardon. So what he did was to keep watch day and night, as he had no desire to act on the aggressive. He trusted his tenants and he knew that it was not possible for the Sardar to take him by surprise. If only he could get timely information, he felt quite competent to deal with the Sardar and his ferocious band.

The villagers of Magura requested the Sardar to "bathe," which meant that they invited the Sardar and his men to stay there and dine. The Sardar demurred. But the villagers pressed again, and he yielded. The fact is, the contributions which the dacoits imposed upon villages were mostly levied in kind. In those days, *tanka* (rupee) was a rare sight. Gold mohurs were more plentiful. The people carried on their purchases with *cowries* (shells), and they had very little need to purchase anything at all. The dacoits themselves lived a merry life. They had neither wives and children to maintain, nor any desire to hoard up money. Whatever they got, they spent in eating and drinking , in big feasts, where people were invited from neighbouring villages;in Poojas, where priests were brought by sheer force to perfrom the ceremonies and then dismissed with liberal presents ; in *jatras* (operas), *kabis* (songs), and military tournaments.

In these latter exercises, all noted men were invited to display their strength and mastery over the weapons they carried. The hosts of the Sardar, we mean the inhabitants of Magura or Amritabazar, thought that a feast to him would save them from contribution for some time to come. The Sardar and his followers expected a very good dinner, and they at last agreed to stop and dine.

A young man proposed some out-door games, and the proposal was received with acclamation by all present. It was the month of Baisakh. The time was about 9 A. M., and people were perspiring from heat. But out-door exercises were the most coveted of all amusements indulged in by the people of Bengal at that period. Badyakars or drummers were immediately sent for; and all resorted to the locality, where the village gymnasium was. Every village had such a place where the people assembled in the morning and the evening to practise themselves in the use of their weapons, to wrestle or to go through other exercises calculated to strengthen the muscle and the nerve.

It would be news to the degenerated species that inhabit Bengal now, that in those days all the *palwans* (wrestlers), *khalowars* (fencers) etc,etc., assembled in the most important village of the quarter, at least five days in the year, for a trial of strength and skill. First, on the *Charak Sank-*

ranti day; second, on the *Janamstami* day; third, on the *Bijoya* day; fourth, on the last day of *Kartik*; and fifth, on the *Sripanchami* day.

When proceeding to the gymnasium, it was perceived that Behari Sardar had kept sentinels to give him information of the approach of any opponent! Indeed, the dacoits never stopped at any place without securing the *ghatties* or passages by posting sentinels. While Behari was sitting and talking, some half-a-dozen of his men were watching the passages, and when they all went to the gymnasium, the Sardar adjusted the position of his *ghatiwals* (sentinels) anew. The fact was, there was no absolute trust between the people and the dacoit chiefs.

One proposed a wrestling match between some village *palwans* and the dacoits. He jocularly appealed to the Sardar to give some lesson to the Chanda brothers, who had become inflated with conceit, and who fancied that they were as strong as Bheem was in days of yore. Now, of these Chanda brothers some five or six were noted *palwans*, noted throughout the district for their strength, courage and skill. But the Sardar said he would never permit that. It would be an unwise step and might lead to serious consequences. So the dacoits shewed some of their feats of strength and skill in the use of arms to the villagers. A good dinner was provided. A big

goat was killed; besides, there were fish, *dahee* and *goor*, but no liquor. The dacoits feasted, and left for their native village Palua.

CHAPTER II.

We said before, that Ameer trusted his tenants, but there was one whom he had injured. He had wounded this tenant in the tenderest part. In short, Ameer had, at a moment of thoughtless passion, sullied the family honour of this man. The man had brought home a beautiful bride aged about 13. Ameer was smitten. He caused a divorce between the man and his wife, and then married the girl himself. The injured husband, though a tenant, vowed deep vengeance, and opened communications with the Sardar. Through him, Behari kept himself informed of the movements of Ameer, even to the minutest detail.

The first *ruse* of the Sardar was to create false alarms in the village. This obliged Ameer to remain in a state of constant preparedness. On every occasion, however, he found that the alarm was a false one. This naturally made him slacken his vigilance a little. He had sent his wife, mentioned above, to her father's house, about four miles from his native village. He sent a *doolie* and three bearers to fetch her. The conveyance, however, was returned, the relations sending him word that she would be sent back next month.

Now this was terrible news to the love-sick Ameer. He himself must go to fetch her. But how to provide against the surprises of the Sardar? He might come in the meantime. Yes, but his father-in-law's house lay only at a distance of four miles. Of course, he would be able to bring his wife home before the Sardar could know that he had left it. Thus thought Ameer. Of an impetuous disposition, he could wait no longer. He assembled his principal tenants, and told them of his intentions, and actually ran towards the village where his wife was.

Among the assembled tenants was the one whose wife Ameer had married. This man had concealed his feelings against Ameer very successfully and secured his complete confidence. While Ameer left home for his father-in-law's house, this man left the village to give information to Behari Sardar that Ameer's house was now absolutely at his disposal.

Behari Sardar had no reason to distrust his informant, but yet he subjected the man to a searching cross-examination. The spy gave satisfactory answer which convinced the Sardar that he had not come to lead him into a trap, but to satisfy his private grudge against the man who had robbed him of his wife.

The Sardar formed his plans after a short reflection. He asked his lieutenants to prepare

themselves for an immediate march. His orders were obeyed promptly, and about seventyfive of the dacoit band stood fully armed before him. This was the usual number he kept with him, while others he stationed at different centres.

It was between eight or nine in the morning. The armed dacoits presented a picturesque appearance. I have already said how they protected their chests from arrows, spears, and swords by wrapping tightly, layer after layer, a thick piece of cloth by which also they protected their faces and heads. This piece covered the face entirely, leaving only the nose and the eyes open. They stood armed with *lathis*, swords and spears to do their leader's bidding. They were all hardy, brave, strong and active, and would not have hesitated a moment to accomplish the plans of their leader, or go through any enterprise, however hazardous.

Behari selected six out of these men to stand guard and prevent the entry of Ameer into the village from that of his father-in-law. A beel or marsh intervened between the two villages. The Sardar directed these six men to disrobe, dress themselves as ordinary rustics, and stand guard on this side of the marsh to prevent Ameer, if he should get the information, from coming back to protect his house.

The great point of the Sardar was to secure the weapons of the villagers. They kept their

weapons, swords of various shapes, spears of all kinds, and lathies,—in the outer house of Ameer. The plan of the Sardar was to pounce upon the village, and at once take possession of the outer-house containing the weapons. His real object was not, however, so much the possession of the village weapons, for he regarded them with contempt, as the "charmed" bow and arrows of Ameer, the whereabouts of which no body knew, not even the spy.

We must here give an account of Ameer. Being a Sheikh and having landed property, he found himself, on the death of his father, when he was about 15, in the position of a leader. He had a well-built, though not a very strong physique. He saw that as a *lathial*, a swordsman, or a lancer, he would have no chance with others. He therefore, determined to maintain his position by archery. He felt that if he could master the art, he would yet be able to lead his following with credit.

He soon found that he had an eye and a pair of arms for good archery. He rarely missed his aim, even in the begining of his self-education. He listened to accounts of the exploits of good archers with a leaping heart, and felt an ambition to imitate or perhaps to excel them. The best archer then was a Rajput in Krishnagore, and to him Ameer went for instruction. There he learnt

much of what he was in need and ignorance of before. He came back home; he improved what he had learnt; and then prepared for himself his "charmed" bow and arrows.

Ameer prepared his own arrows. Those prepared by others were not so obedient, so powerful, as those prepared by himself. He prepared his own bow: and without that particular bow he was almost helpless. After repeated experiments, he found out how a good bow should be prepared. The Jaon bamboo is the best for the purpose. But a fully-developed and perfectly shaped bamboo of the necessary sort was rarely to be found. He found a piece, however, and prepared his bow with the toil of several months. This he painted. It was as long as himself, and at first glance, would appear to be a delicate weapon. But it was not so. The string he prepared of the flax beaten out of the aloe.

The arrows too he himself prepared from reeds which grew in low-lying marshes. He alone knew how to prepare arrows. For they flew like lightning, and seemed to defy the laws of Conic Sections. One of his daily duties was to keep his bow and arrows before him and salaam them three times, while some charms or prayers were uttered. The public believed, both Hindus and Mussalmans, that Ameer had became a *Siddha* (adept) in archery, and that he could do anything with his bow.

Ameer had one weak point. He was irresistible with the bow and arrows manufactured by him. He was weak, nervous, irresolute without them, even though in possession of a good bow and arrows manufactured by others. The great object of Behari was to possess himself of the bow and arrows of Ameer.

Ameer, on the other hand, was very particular about his weapons. He generally carried them in his hand when in the shade. Exposure to the sun would spoil his bow and arrows ; and he never exposed them, when he could help it, to the blaze of that luminary. During the middle of the day, he always kept his weapons in a hiding-place which no body knew. So when Ameer started from home in the morning for his father-in-law's he left his bow and arrows behind, though where, it was not known to any. When Ameer's enemy gave information of Ameer's departure from his village to the Sardar, the first question he asked was, whether Ameer had taken his bow and arrows with him. Being assured that Ameer had left them behind, the Sardar thought that his game was safe ; and that if he could get possession of the bow and arrows, Ameer would be absolutely at his disposal.

The order was given, "Run and surround Ameer's house;" and seventy men ran furiously towards it without uttering a sound. An open

space, about half-a-mile in length, intervened between Palua and Magura. Some of Ameer's tenants were weeding their paddy plants. They saw from a distance the furious rush of the dacoits. They knew that Ameer was not at home, and they at once divined the object of the rush. They held a hasty consultation amongst themselves, and devised means to give speedy information to Ameer, and to the village too.

The dacoits came at double quick, but yet they found Ameer's house deserted. They, however immediately surrounded it, and stationed sentinels to guard the approaches. Behari stood in the court-yard, more than six feet high, giving directions to his followers, his four-cubit sword in his hand. He posted an additional set of sentinels to guard the outer-house alluded to above. This outer-house contained the weapons of the villagers and perhaps the bow and arrows of Ameer.

The villagers had time only to remove the ladies from Ameer's house, but property and weapons were left behind. The dacoits surrounded the house with a rush and a loud warwhoop of Jay Kalee, though no one had any notion as to what the Sardar was aiming at. Some youthful villagers proposed resistance, but the elders pooh-poohed the idea. How could they fight without weapons? "Let us send an old man to parley," said the wisest amongst the villagers. And a

very old Mussalman, with a white flowing beard, called Nana, was sent to the Sardar.

He approached unarmed, bent double by age, and he was led to the Sardar. "Ameer is not here," said the old man. "If you want to loot his house it is at your disposal. If you want to loot the village you are welcome to do it. We have no arms.

The Sardar reflected for a moment, and then assumed a jocular tone. "Nana Saheb," said he, "is it meet that when I come hungry you do not give me and my people food ?"

Said Nana: "Yes, we were thinking of that. But it seemed you came angry. The attitude of your men is not like that of guests. Quiet your men, sit down, and we shall do our best to give a little gosta (meat) and rootee(rice or bread) to you and your men."

To make a long story short, we next find the dacoit band sitting in rows, under half-a-dozen gigantic mango trees, in front of the outer-house of Ameer, taking their dinner. To the sentinels, dinners were sent at their posts. Dinners were also sent to the sentinels guarding against the approach of Ameer to the village. The dacoits had copiously partaken of liquor. Behari sat in the middle, squatting upon a broad plantain leaf. Every one of the dacoits had partially undressed himself, though they kept their respective weapons

by their side. Talking of weapons those belonging to the villagers, kept in the outer-house, had been brought from there for their better protection, and were seen lying in heaps under the mango trees, within the sight and reach of the dacoits. Even after a most diligent search, the bow and arrows of Ameer had not been found!

The disarmed villagers were freely permitted to see the State dinner, at their expense. And the warriors of the village, old and young, and children too, were there to witness the great feast. The dacoits had almost done with their dinner; indeed, they had gone as far as the dish of *dahee*, when the mirth of the dacoits, who were so long eating silently out of respect to their Sardar, could not be restrained. One cried "Ameer Sheikh ki tateh", or, in other words, "victory to Ameer Sheik", when fifty voices echoed the words in a loud shout. The Sardar himself, a little elated by the drink, was led to join in the mirth, and exclaimed in a loud voice: "Ameer, where art thou, our exellent host?" This was repeated by fifty throats, and the sound made the earth to tremble as it were.

But before this sound had ceased, the Sardar heard a whiz and felt something touch his head. He quickly turned round to see what it was. He saw that his cap had heen carried off from his

head, and pinned to the earth about a yard and-a-half from him, by an arrow !

But he was allowed no time to make any close examination of the arrow, or think over the affair. Just then some one appeared on the scene from behind a mango tree and said : "Here is Golam Ameer Sheik hazeer", which means, "here is your slave Ameer Sheik present." "What does huzoor demand of me ?" The Sardar saw Ameer Sheik leaning, as if carelessly, against a mango tree in his front, his stringed bow hanging on his right shoulder, and the quiver of his arrows on his left, with a smile in his face, as if mocking at his majesty !

We have now to explain how Ameer succeeded in eluding the vigilance of the ghatties or sentries appointed by the Sardar to prevent his entry into the village. The fact was, the Sardar knew very well that it would be impossible to stop Ameer, in that way. For to guard a big village in that manner would require hundreds of men. The main object the Sardar had in view was to stop the passage of Ameer as long as it was possible to do so.

Besides, as I said before, Ameer was powerless without his "charmed" bow and arrows. The Sardar was convinced that they had been left behind by Ameer. He had no doubt that the bow and arrows were either in Ameer's house

or somewhere near it. He closely guarded Ameer's house and its surroundings; and he felt sure that if he could do that, he and his party would be absolutely safe from any outside attack by the latter.

It has been already stated that the villagers, who were weeding paddy, (it was the end of Jaishta i. e. May and June) had sent information to Ameer as soon as they saw the approach of the dacoit band. Ameer had made arrangements to bring his wife after breakfast, and he had sat to it. Ameer was enjoying his breakfast, when the breathless messenger disturbed his enjoyment with the terrible news, that the dacoits, fully armed, were marching towards his house.

Now, this was dreadful news to Ameer. The dacoits were like ordinary men, under ordinary circumstances; but they wreaked fearful vengeance upon those who defied their authority. His mother, his aunts, his sister-in-law were in the house. His house was thatched with straw, though the outer-apartment had brick walls. How could he know that the dacoits did not mean insult to the ladies? And would they not burn the house down?

In a state of terrible anguish of mind, Ameer left his breakfast and ran towards his native village. His practised eye, however, saw at once that ghatties had been placed on the opposite

side of the beel, and his passage barred. He could, indeed, reach his house by a circuitous route, but it would take hours to do so. The roads, leading to his house, were two,—one lying to the north, and the other to the south, of the beel. Two fully-armed men guarded the two passages. Two more guarded the beel, while two more blocked the other two passages by which he could yet reach his house, though by very circuitous route.

Fortunately, at that time, a good many men were engaged in fishing in the beel. They used palm canoes for the purpose. Each canoe had one or two occupants, and the man in the front stood with a fishing spear to strike at the fishes which might give an indication of their presence below the surface of the water. Ameer joined this fishing party, changed his good clothes for the piece of rag which one of the party had round his loins, and thus disguised himself as a rustic. In short, he at last succeeded in deceiving the sentries who were guarding the beel ; and as we said before, this was not altogether a difficult feat. The Sardar never seriously expected that he would be able to prevent the approach of Ameer.

Ameer reached his village, and was very much relieved to find that the dacoits were in an amiable mood. They had not only not used one word of insult, or touched one item of property,

but had agreed to dine and make a gala-day of it. He sat thinking, surrounded by the elders of the village, in the house of a tenant, a good many hundred yards off from his own.

But yet there was no knowing how the dacoits would act in the end. They were drinking, and it would be only in keeping with their character to change their peaceful intentions, and become violent. Ameer thought that the best thing for him would be to tender his submission. But would that mollify Behari? What would then prevent the latter from hacking to pieces his old enemy? The pride of Ameer also revolted against submission. He must first make a determined effort to rescue his means of attack and defence.

He had left his bow and his leather quiver, concealed in the thatch of the outer-house. That was one of the places where he hid them now and then. In the morning, he had left them there, and he was almost absolutely sure that they had not been removed. He determined to reach his own house, disguised as a rustic, to see if he could get hold of them.

Ameer formed his plan. The rustics of the village, one by one, approached the dacoit camp. The young and the old, the children, and even some old women were there. The dacoits were cooking; some were bathing in the tank close by, (the tank still exists.) The ghatties were guarding

the passages, and Behari was talking to some respectable villagers. Among the villagers, who watched the doings of the dacoits, was Ameer, unperceived and unrecognized by the dacoits. Ameer was not known by sight to most of them; he was dressed as an ordinary dirty rustic; and the dacoits had, besides, partaken much of paddy rum. Thus Ameer succeeded in keeping himself unrecognized among the crowd.

Now, with all their efforts, the Indians have never been able to acclimatize drink in the country. Drink will never suit the stomach of an Indian. He can never drink without being affected. See, how a European will swallow a bottle of strong drink and remain unaffected. But a veteran Indian drinker will often get drunk at the sight of liquor. This is the case now; the case in those days was worse. The sentinels were reeling under the influence of Dhanyeswari (paddy liquor.)

Gradually the crowd of rustics thickened in that part of the outer-house where Ameer had hid his bow and leather arrow-bag. Ameer stood close to the place,—his breast heaved with excitement. He brought the bow and the leather-bag out of the thatch unperceived, and he left the place hurriedly, unperceived too.

Ameer now felt that he was master of the situation. But he had no desire to present himself before the dacoits as a rustic. He entered

the house of a neighbour, secured a clean piece of cotton cloth, and tightly wrapped it round his narrow waist. He also procured a piece of leather by which he covered his left arm to protect it from the string of his bow. The iron ring on his right thumb he never parted with; so he had not to borrow it. In explanation, we may mention, that the iron ring is wanted for the purpose of drawing the bow when discharging an arrow; the string will hurt the left arm and so archers protect it by wrapping round it a piece of leather.

Ameer stood behind a mango tree. The dacoits were then eating, and it was within the power of Ameer to shoot Behari Sardar dead in a twinkle. But the idea was revolting to him. He surely was no dacoit. How could he shoot at a man from behind a cover? How could he shoot at one who was dining.

But it was another feeling which powerfully moved Ameer. Had not the Sardar treated him generously? He had everything belonging to Ameer at his absolute disposal, and yet he had not uttered one insulting word. This feeling of gratitude so completely overpowered Ameer that he felt something like affection for the Sardar. Indeed, he knew that if his presence were known, it would spoil the feast; so he would have patiently waited till the Sardar had finished his

dinner. But the Sardar and his men brought matters to a crisis. When the band cried *Fate* (victim) to Ameer, he bore it patiently. But when the Sardar himself joined in the mirth and demanded to know where his host Ameer was, he could bear it no longer. He aimed at the cap of the Sardar, and the obedient arrow gently carried it off the Sardar's head, and pinned it on the ground behind!

After discharging the arrow, Ameer flung the bow on his left shoulder, advanced a step from behind his cover, and declared, "Golam Ameer Sheikh is hazeer (present). What would you have of me?"

The dacoit band sat petrified, but Behari rose with sword in hand!

He and Ameer gazed at each other!

A good swordsman can cut an arrow to pieces. But a swordsman, however expert and vigilant, was yet at the mercy of a swift-shooter or good shot. He could cut the first arrow, but he would have no time to defend himself from the second, at least from the third. Rage, disappointment and fear alternately played on the features of the Sardar. But Ameer leaned against the mango tree, and only looked triumphantly at the Sardar.

At last the Sardar found words. Said he: "Young man! you took me unawares."

"So did you!" replied Ameer. And the Sardar bit his lip.

"Why delay? Send your shafts. I am ready," said the Sardar.

Ameer.—"I bear you no resentment. Finish your dinner."

Behari replied: "Then come; let us dine together," and the Sardar threw away his five—foot sword! "Come now."

Ameer.—"I cannot go into your midst, for though I can trust you, I cannot trust your men. Besides, I have taken a vow. You have respected my honour and property; and, in return, I have respected your life. We are thus quits. I can, however, never make friends with you unless you tell me the name of the spy who betrayed me to you."

Ameer, having got no immediate reply from the Sardar, continued, and this time with a little vehemence: "If you and I must be friends, let us have no secrets between us. Tell me who is the base spy that betrayed me?"

The countenance of the leader betrayed a slight frown, but he immediately assumed a cordial tone and said: "Sheik Ameer! You know our creed. We do not betray our agents; we cannot do that without trampling upon honour and breaking a most sacred oath. Dacoits though we are, you know we cannot break an oath, or commit a mean act."

Ameer replied, and though he tried to be calm, there was some bitterness in his tone. "This is unreasonable, Sardar Saheb. You and I are to be friends, and yet you will protect my deadliest enemy. We cannot meet breast to breast, with such an obstacle between us."

The Sardar then assumed a lofty tone, and said: "To secure your friendship I will not commit a dishonourable act,—I will not do so even to save my life. I cannot do so what ever may happen. Now, this is my last word; and, young man, you can take your choice and do what you think best. Let not men say that Behari Sardar committed a dishonourable act to appease a wrathful opponent."

Fellu Gazee was the name of the man whose wife Ameer had married, and who, in revenge, had betrayed him to the Sardar. He was there, and so were all the others of Ameer's men. The attitude of Ameer and the Sardar created a profound sensation among the two hundred men present, dacoits and villagers. They all apprehended a split, and got very much excited, though none ventured to utter a word.

When the Sardar threw the gauntlet to Ameer and while Ameer was making up his mind, Fellu approached and stood before him. Said he, amidst breathless silence, "Sheikjee My land-lord! I cannot permit further mischief. It was I who

betrayed you. You deprived me of my wife, and I, in revenge, betrayed you. Here I am. Now, shoot me dead."

All eyes were turned towards Fellu. Ameer's brow darkened. He was seized by a fierce passion and he took in his left hand, the bow which was hanging on his shoulders. He remembered how he had trusted Fellu, favoured him and loved him too; and how Fellu had, with consummate hypocrisy, returned the affection and won his confidence. He remembered too, how Fellu had brought in the dacoits and placed the property and honour of all the villagers at their disposal. He remembered all these, and lost all control over himself.

"And so, Nimakharam" (traitor), said Ameer "for the wrong that I did, you wanted to deliver the entire village, your own village, over to the enemy?"

He was interrupted by Fellu with these words "I do not justify my conduct. Here is my breast, send a shaft through it, and have your revenge." Fellu stood before Ameer and the crowd, and he looked like a passionless statue. His countenance betrayed no fear—it was calm, and so noble and beautiful! Ameer gazed at him in wonder Whence did Fellu get this sudden beauty?—thought every one.

Ameer's face betrayed a fierce struggle within

his breast. At last, he ended by hanging down his head,—in contrition.

"Fellu," said he. "Forgive me, if you can."

But surely, we are not going to write a novel; we must, however, relate the story as we heard it. The Sardar came forward and embraced Ameer and said : " Thou art a noble fellow."

They all sat under the mango trees surrounding the courtyard of Ameer's house. Said Behari: "Thy fame as an archer has spread far and wide. It is said that there is no one in the world who can rival thee in archery. Show us a little of thy skill, so that my eyes may go from here delighted, as my stomach surely does."

Ameer craved leave for a few minutes for a change of dress. He came back dressed in a moment. There was, however, nothing to protect his person from his enemies. But he had dressed tightly which displayed his well-built figure to great advantage. He stood before the assembled crowd with some of his pupils. He placed his bow and arrows upon the ground and salaamed them thrice, and then he began the exhibition.

The first thing that Ameer showed was the strength of his arrows. There was a betel-nut tree close by. Ameer let an arrow fly at it with force, and it pierced the trunk through and stuck there. The dacoits remarked that no shield, not even one of rhinoceros hide, would protect a man from

a shaft, shot with so much force. The arrow stuck there, and was left in that position for several years for people to come and see, till a big gale or cyclone uprooted the betel-nut tree.

One of his pupils stood at a distance of one hundred cubits from Ameer, with a betelnut on his right palm. Ameer steadied his aim and let fly his arrow with some care. The arrow carried the nut on its head a few yards from its resting place. The feat elicited tremendous applause.

Another feat which Ameer showed was with a *gonra* lemon. Now, this is a degenerated species of the orange, even smaller than *narangee*. Ameer stood ten cubits in advance of his pupil, who sent the lemon with great force rolling in the courtyard. Ameer aimed at the rolling lemon and pinned it with his arrow to the great delight of the spectators.

Mango plucking was the next feat shown, which was still more wonderful. Ameer pierced an unripe mango with his arrow which stuck in the fruit. This gave a swinging motion to the mango, the arrow sticking to it. When the mango became still, Ameer again aimed, and this time the shaft stuck to the tail of the first arrow ! There was again a swinging motion, and again Ameer waited until the mango became still. A third arrow was then shot which stuck to the tail of the second arrow. At the third shot the mango fell to

the ground, with three arrows sticking to it in a line !

His pupils then urged Ameer to perform the dig bazee (the somersault). But Ameer declined. The Sardar then pleaded, and all the dacoits pressed. A good many of them were then weeping in joy at the display of the wonderful feats of Ameer. A good many felt an irresistible impulse to come and embrace and kiss him, but the presence of the Sardar checked their ardour.

Ameer said : "My ostad (preceptor) commanded me never to attempt such a feat when there was the least breath of wind. I do not, as a rule make the attempt unless I am alone. Besides success is uncertain. so please excuse me."

" But," said the Sardar, "are not your arrows under the control of a gin (evil spirit)? Why then deprive us of the pleasure ? " Ameer smiled. He said he did not know the gin who was said to be so friendly; he was certain also that a successful dig bajee was beyond its control. "However," continued he, "as I do not feel much wind now, I will try ; but success I do not guarantee." With this, he salammed his bow and arrows again, and prepared himself for his gigantic and last effort. He first examined his bow carefully, and selected three of his best arrows. He stood in the middle of the court-yard, then slowly and silently drew the string and let go an arrow, not with great

force, though yet sufficiently high to make it almost invisible.

The arrow fell a few paces in front of him with its head downwards, penetrating the earth an inch or so. The arrow stood perfectly erect! Ameer took a second arrow, and sent it up with great deliberation. The spectators watched its progress with intense excitement. When the arrow took a downward direction, the excitement increased. Down the arrow came amidst breathless silence and indescribable excitement, and it fell exactly upon the tail of the first arrow,—perfectly erect! A second or two after this occurrence, the Mussalmans raised the cry of Allah, Allah, and the dacoits that of Kalee, Kalee, and the demonstration of joy continued for some time. Such a feat was never before heard of. Ameer declined to discharge his third arrow; for he felt then that the wind had risen a little.

Here we end our story. The dacoit rule in Bengal was supplanted by the planter and zemindar rule. The dacoits were subsequently exterminated with the help of the zemindars and the indigo-planters. In the place of the dacoits, the latter began to rule the country. The Magistrates of that period did and could do nothing. The police only hampered them, and the people never resorted to courts for the adjustment of their differences.

Poor Behari Sardar died a most unromantic death. He was apprehended in his old age, with the help of a treacherous comrade. When Behari found himself surrounded in the hut, where he was concealing himself and that there was no way of escape, he took a spear and caused a deep gash in his abdomen, laying his intestines open. In an insensible condition, he was taken to the Jessore hospital, where, wonder of wonders! he recovered, his strong constitution helping him no doubt. Behari was sent across the Kalapanee, where he died after a very short residence. It is now peace in Bengal, nay, in every part of India. The country has been disarmed, and the result of that measure is that not only has all chivalry fled from the country but all martial spirit. Nay, we fear, the people are day by day losing their manliness. So, you see, even peace has its disadvantages. The people have become now so helpless that they find it difficult to encounter a mad jackal. The British Government might have strengthened its position by utilizing this martial spirit of the people.

THE PERPETUAL SLAVERY OF INDIA

We quoted some months ago a paragraph from Max Muller, in which the learned Professor declared that the contemplation, that the Hindus, so gentle, gifted and innocent, should be made subject to other nations, for no fault of their own but simply because they had not cultivated the art of war, filled him with profound sorrow. Yes, the history of the Hindus is a history of continued humiliation ; but we must bear up with that. It is also a history of massacres of their men, women and children ; of outrages upon their women and sacred objects ; and of the plunder and burning of their cities which they had built with the toil of ages. We shall describe, in a few short sentences, how Hindus began their national life, and how they have been treated by their fellow-beings.

Hindus lived innocent lives and respected the lives of the meanest creatures; they cultivated learning and philosophy; they preached and practised spirituality, neither wishing ill to their fellow-beings nor apprehending ill from others. While thus passing their lives, they found themselves suddenly confronted by an overwhelming force of marauders. They saw that resistance

would be useless; and they found also that the pitiless fiends who had invaded their country, had no human sentiments in them. So, what Hindus did, was to kill their women and to fall, with swords in hand, in the midst of the attacking hordes. There they were cut to pieces; their country was looted and subsequently burnt to ashes; and an important town and an important clan were for ever extinguished.

The above is the epitome of the history of India. In our schools and colleges, History of India is taught. Of course, students must go through that teaching, and there is no help for it. But grown-up Hindus never, if they can help it, touch the History of India. It is not pleasant reading to them. It was thus that history was not written in India.

Neither, we think, is the study of Hindu History a profitable one, for, it teaches infidelity. The outrages committed upon India by barbarians in their greed for material gains, are calculated to lead the Hindus to the idea that they are not in keeping with the character of the good God of the universe. That a nation so innocent, so gentle—a nation which has taught His worship to mankind—should be subjected to so gross outrages for no fault of their own, is no proof to the ordinary mind that God is good and just.

Max Muller was profoundly affected at seeing

the condition of innocent India, because he came somewhat in touch with the people through their literature. But do Englishmen, who are in direct touch with the people of this country—who are, in fact, in the position of their "Ma Bap"—feel a similarly profound sympathy for the abject condition of an ancient people? Is not India, in many respects, the noblest and most interesting country, and the only country in the world which has no national liberty? And who are its masters now? The English! But how can this be? Englishmen cannot bear injustice or oppression. They paid from their own pockets for the liberation of slaves in America, and for them formed a Republic, called Liberia. How is it that Englishmen, who are also ready to go to war with the Sultan because his Bulgarian subjects have no political liberty, have kept India in political bondage? How is it that the only subject nation in the world is under the sway of the most liberty loving nation in the world?

When Hindus recovered from the shock of the Greek invasion the Mahomedans came. It took the Mussalmans three hundred years to obtain possession of the country. To ascertain how India fared under them, we have only to examine the most sacred temples of the Hindus. The Image of Bishweshwar was—well, everybody knows what was done with the Image. The greatest

temple in the world, that of Gobinda Deva, was dismantled by Aurungzeb, on the plea that the act would be pleasing to his God.

Hindus never cared for political power. If they had done so, the Khsetriyas, who supplied the country with Kings, statesmen, and soldiers, would have been put in the first and not in the second rank. The Brahmins, who formed the first class, as a rule, never meddled with politics, nor served the State. Those who did, were considered outcastes. Chanakya, the celebrated Hindu statesman and minister of Chandra Gupta gave up the world and spent the last days of his life in wilderness, in order to wipe out his sins which he had accumulated by his contact with politics.

It was not, as urged by Max Muller, that Hindus lost their independence because they had not cultivated the art of war. They lost their independence, because they did not put much value upon it.

It was of no moment to the Hindus, who governed them, if they were governed well. The lot of Kings, ministers and generals was not envied by the higher classes. Fighting and all political work were left to inferior classes, the Brahmins avoiding them as beneath their dignity. Here, then we enter upon an important phase of this question, viz, the present abject condition of

India. What led to this subject condition of India? It was not that the Hindus did not know how to fight—it was because their instincts were opposed to those of other nations. When the Mussalman general invaded Bengal, the King and his advisers yielded without a struggle. The King was old, and he had no thought for the world. His advisers and his people did not also much care as to who ruled them, provided they were let alone with the cultivation of their learning and religion. One can see that the best energies of the Western nations are devoted to the cultivation of the art of war, the invention of infernal and destructive machines and manageable war-balloons, and the raising and equipment of gigantic armies. Their national energies are focussed in conquests, in diplomacy, in arts and commerce, and so forth.

But in India, Kings abdicated their thrones when they found that they were growing old, and statesmen did so, to wipe out their sins. Every man under fifty was required to lead the life of a religious man; and he who did not, was considered something like a leper. The intellectual classes devoted all their energies to the cultivation of the arts, sciences and their spiritual faculties. As for fighting, the shedding of blood was considered an inhuman practice. Surely, men were not dogs! Those, who killed fellow-beings, were Ghouls,

Rakhasas, and so forth. Indeed, the Hindus avoided the cares of the State, and they would have thankfully given up everything to the Musalmans if they had not committed oppressions. The Mussalmans fell because of their oppressions.

The East has been called "sensuous," because of the stories contained in the book, called "The Arabian Nights' Entertainments." The description of "black-eyed houries" and "sparkling goblets of gold" in that book, created the impression that the people of the East were devoted to "women and wine." But if Persia or Baghdad was sensuous, it would be manifestly unjust to call India so. Notwithstanding all the efforts of the Abkari Department, the people of India have not yet been induced to take largely to intoxicating liquors. It would be no exaggeration to say, that drinking is even now almost unknown in India.

In the same manner, it may be said that the custom of eating meat does not obtain in this country. The higher classes are almost all vegetarians; and even the lower classes, though they are permitted to taste almost only the flesh of goats and sheep, rarely have recourse to it. We have thus a rare use of meat and drink in India, which would never have been the case if the country were sensuous.

Of course, polygamy is permitted under the

national law of the land, in order to keep the balance of men and women equal in the marriage market; but the custom of marrying more wives than one, is likewise almost unknown. On the other hand, widows are not permitted to re-marry. It has often been alleged that this is a cruel custom. This must seem so to those who cannot go beyond the flesh. It was introduced only to give every woman a chance of marriage; for, re-marriage of widows would create an equal number of maids in the country.

But it must, at the same time, be borne in mind, that if widows are not permitted to re-marry here, in India alone men also are seen voluntarily to give up the world and its pleasures for the sake of a better future. If the custom of prohibiting the re-marriage of widows prevailed, along with it also prevailed the custom, amongst males, of adopting the life of an ascetic. So great an effect had the precepts and preachings of the Hindu saints produced upon the people, that they came vividly to realize, in their minds, the worthlessness of all worldly pleasures. It was thus that men turned ascetics in large numbers. Indeed, it was in India alone that people were divided into *grihastas* (family men) and *udasins* (ascetics). During the days of Sree Chaitanya, the Prophet of Nuddea,—that is, about four hundred years ago,—the number of ascetics, it was estimated, formed

about one-sixteenth of the entire male population.

It would, therefore, be manifestly unjust to call a people sensuous who, as a rule, never touched liquor or meat, and a large number of whom, male and female, lived the lives of ascetics.

The matter would be made more plain when we come to consider the social constitution of the people. Here people were divided into four classes: (1) the spiritual and intellectual; (2) warriors, statesmen, and political characters; (3) merchants and trades-people; (4) mechanics, agriculturists and labourers. In other words, people were divided into Brahmins, Kshetriyas, Vaishyas and Sudras. The Brahmins as forming the spiritual and intellectual classes, obtained the first place. They had precedence over Kings, who belonged to the second class. Kings had to leave their thrones and fall at the feet of Brahmins. The Kshetriyas, who formed the second class, furnished the country with Kings, statesmen and warriors. The Vaishyas, who represented the wealth of the country, belonged to the third class only. The spiritual and intellectual classes, who formed the first class, were forbidden to meddle with property altogether. The Vaishyas, who formed the third class, accumulated wealth, and were thus the wealthy men in the country. They had, however, an inferior place in society.

In the West, however, there is a different

arrangement. The Archbishop of Canterbury does not enjoy the same rank and respect as Mr. Prime Minister Gladstone. And the King himself is not only the head of the country, but also the head of the Church. Thus in the West, those who had power, that is to say, brute force and wealth, obtained the first place. In India, those who had brute force like the Kshetriyas, and wealth like the Vaisyas occupied only subordinate places.

Now, if sensuousness had been the characteristic of India, the people would have considered the acquirement of wealth and brute force as the first objects in life; for, the gratification of the senses can be secured only by the possession of brute force and wealth. The first object in life in the West is material prosperity; in India, it is spirituality and learning. The allegation that India is sensuous is, therefore, absolutely without a foundation.

When the Western hordes crossed the Indus and came into the country, they found themselves in contact with a race from whom they differed considerably in instincts and modes of life. India was not prepared for the rush of such a horde; and the pitiless invaders carried everything before them. When Porus declared that he expected, as a matter of course, a kingly treatment from Alexander the Great, the "hero" was surprised. He was a Western, and he knew the people fought only for "greed of material gain."

Greeks were followed by Persians and Afghans. Hindus fought bravely for their religion, home and hearth; but the hordes were too many for them. The present masters of India claim that they are a superior and enlightened, and the Indians a half-civilized and inferior, race. Their chief ground for this claim is, they are masters here and the Indians are slaves. But the argument is not conclusive. The Moors ruled Spain, France and Austria. That fact does not prove that they were a more enlightened, or that they came of a superior, race than the French. It was the barbarians who conquered Rome; and the Romans had ruled the Greeks, Spartans, Athenians, etc. The argument, therefore, that the English are a superior race because they hold sway over the Indians, is not thus conclusive. Nobody ventured to urge that the Mussalmans were a superior race to the Hindus; yet, the former held absolute saway over the latter for several hundred years.

Of course, the English come of a superior race, and they have eminent qualities, or else they could never have acquired so much ascendency in the world. But they have yet serious defects in their national character. To be a really superior race, they must give up the practice of levelling guns at fellow-beings and killing them ; of seizing lands belonging to others ; of mowing down men who

are defending their home, hearth, religion and national existence, by cannon shot or hanging them on a charge of disloyalty; and, of taking away the political liberties of weaker nations. The above practices England must give up; for, they are opposed to Christian religion, and are not in keeping with the teachings of their sweet Lord, on whom they depend for everlasting welfare, nor with those of their own instincts which are proverbially generous.

The natives of India and their English rulers do not agree in their views about public affairs regarding the country. Let us see, however, where they agree and where they do not. The great ambition of Englishmen, at least, of most of them, is to hold sway over India for ever and ever. Of course, there are some who do not go so far and who think that the functions of England are only to prepare India for a free existence in future. But the number of Englishmen holding the latter view, is very small, and, if they venture to give utterance to their sentiments, they are persecuted by all other classes of their countrymen, and are called traitors to their country. Because somebody was supposed to have used the expression "Perish India,"—though as a matter of fact, nobody had ever actually done it,—very few Englishmen can utter his name and sentiments without giving vent to a feeling of indignation.

It is, however, a settled thing with most Englishmen, that the greatest object of their lives is to see that this Empire of India be never permitted to slip out of their hands.

Strange as it may appear, it is a fact that in this view there is no difference between the natives of India and their rulers. If the prospect of a separation between India and England gives most Englishmen a shudder, it affects Indians also in a similar manner. Indians themselves consider that a separation, for the present, at least, would be a very great calamity to them.

We shall explain why. First, there is not a centre for Hindus to rally round, nor a centre for Mussalmans in India to do so. Secondly, a perfect union between Hindus and Mussalmans is impossible; and, therefore, the idea of a Hindu-Mussalman Government is Utopian. Thirdly, all that man really needs, is only good rule, no matter from whatever source it comes. It is only vanity which thirsts after what is called a national existence. It is quite possible for England to give India a good rule. Fourthly, the national feeling is not as strong among Hindus as among other nations in the world. This, because Hindus have been moulded by their religion to the thought that everything pertaining to this world is transitory that India is not their permanent home, and that the chief object of human existence

is to secure a good place in the permanent home, which is in other world. Patriotism is considered to be the highest virtue in the world by other nations; and they will sacrifice everything, even their souls, for the cause of their country. In India, love of country has not that all-controlling influence. Love of country has a third place in the heart of a Hindu, the love of religion occupying the first.

It is this peculiarity of the Hindu character, which led them to lose their national independence. It is this feeling which led the higher classes in India to stand aloof from public affairs of the country. Politics was considered beneath the notice of man with an immortal existence hereafter, because it dealt with purely worldly affairs. Thus the Brahmins refused to be Prime Ministers of Hindu Kings, and thus those Brahmins who agreed to serve, were considered as fallen beings who had to regain their previous position by a rigorous penance.

Well, we see here a perfect accord between the natives of India and their English rulers in regard to English supremacy in India. If the English people are resolved to hold India at any cost, the Indians too consider British supremacy essential for peace, in this land of Hindus and Mussalmans.

Yet, Indians and the English people will not

agree, and are engaged in an irreconcilable feud. We shall try to explain why. It is because most Englishmen will not only have British supremacy, but something more.

What they will have is, as expressed by Colonel Parnell, "a perpetual military despotism for India." Please mind the word "perpetual." They will not only have despotism, but one that must be perpetual. They will not even make a beginning of an eventual relaxation of their iron grip; and, if they were led, during the past, for reasons which need not be enumerated here, to make any provision for a future relaxation of this hold, they would repent, and do their utmost to see that such provisions were rendered a dead letter.

In the above, we have laid down, we suppose, in clear language, why Indians and their English masters differ in their views about public affairs. What Indians expected, was British supremacy in the beginning, and British citizenship eventually. What Colonel Parnell and all other Englishmen holding his views, would reserve for the Indians, is absolute subjection, which must be perpetual. But, what is absolute subjection? Well, it can be explained by the manner in which India is governed now,—that is to say, byofficials imported from Europe and armed with irresistible powers. Indians offered to provide better material

than these imported officials at a cheaper cost but, the proposal of Simultaneous Examinations gave Englishmen here a shudder. You can offer the present rulers better materials at a cheaper cost; but they would not accept such offers, because such an arrangement would run counter to their paramount idea of keeping India in perpetual despotic subjection. It is not that Englishmen do not know and feel the justice and expediency of utilising native talent, which is cheap, in a poor country which ought to be kept contented under an alien rule. But, what of that? A Simultaneous Examination is not compatible with their great idea of keeping India under absolute and perpetual sway.

Thus it is that Indians and their rulers do not agree. The rulers are always for measures which would secure to England the *perpetual* and *absolute* sovereignty of India. Indians object to such measures, and would have seeds sown for the eventual attainment of British citizenship. Hence this perpetual feud. It is not that the rulers do not appreciate the advantages of cheap and indigenous labour, or those of economy, or the needless cruelty of keeping on the Statue book such a measure as the Age of Consent Act but their policy requires that officials must be imported from England, that oftentimes expenses are better than economy, and that it is essential that officials

should have such weapons as the measure of the Age of Consent Act, to be able to keep people under control.

We have now to see what this perpetual subjection of India means for Englishmen. To secure the absolute mastership of India, England has to induce a large number of its best men to come out here to rule. If these men refuse to come, the great idea of Englishmen, to hold India in perpetual subjection, falls to the ground. Those Englishmen have, therefore, to be *persuaded* to come out here, with offers of divers advantages, namely, princely salaries, princely pensions, generous leave rules, absolute sway over the people, immunity from punishment for misdeeds, and so forth. Those who come out here, know their position of advantage. They naturally take advantage of their position and tyrannize over their countrymen at home. The Exchange difficulty having reduced their incomes, they plainly told their countrymen at home, that they would not come out unless their pay was increased. Englishmen at home had to yield to this threat and dictation, for the purpose of carrying out their idea of holding India in perpetual sway. They further demanded that the Parliamentary Vote about the Simultaneous Examination should be set at nought; and it was done, though it meant a blow at their own glorious constitution.

At the present moment, it is exceedingly doubtful which is the subordinate authority—the Indian Government or the British Parliament.

The authorities will thus only inaugurate such measures as will, in their opinion, secure to Englishmen this absolute and perpetual sovereignty. To this the natives of the soil object. The latter demand that the authorities should make a beginning for the eventual absorption of the people into the British Empire. This the authorities refuse to do. Hence this eternal and irreconcilable feud. Englishmen should, however, take note of what this desire for perpetual sovereignty of India costs them. We fancy they lose much more than they gain by this desire.

HAVE Englishmen taken stock of the losses that they have to sustain for the purpose of securing the absolute and perpetual sovereignty ofIndia? It is only proper that they should do it. All reasonable and practical men do, now and then, see whether they are making any profit or not in their occupations. We have already taken a moral view of the question. Englishmen, as the leading nation in the world, are naturally objects of imitation to others. The example, shown by England by extending her conquests, has demoralized the whole of Europe. It may be easily shown that the reduction of civilised Europe to the condition of an armed camp; the employment of the best

energies of the enlightened inhabitants of that continent to fighting; the invention and construction of deadly weapons; the conversion of the best men in a country to something like fighting materials,—all this is mainly due to the immoral example set before Europe by the leading nation of the world, the English. It is true that the Spaniards, the Portugese, and the Dutch first pointed out the way; it is true also that if England had been worsted in its encounter with France the latter country would like England have conquered the world. But the stern fact remains that these conquests mean disruption of society, contempt for moral laws, disregard of human lives and rights of nations; and are thus putting up an insuperable barrier to the progress of humane principles, which alone mark out true civilization from false, and the human species from the brute creation.

So long the Indians are not blessed with the privileges of the colonials, their country will remain in the condition of "a valuable property." This policy of keeping the country deprived of the rights of self-government has created the necessity of guarding India against foreign invasion and internal rebellion. We have now to see what England has to pay for these two possible necessities referred to above. It is impossible to give an exhaustive account on this head; but, we can give

some idea to-day of the sacrifices of England for this purpose.

First of all, Englishmen have to keep some sixty or seventy thousands of their best men confined in this country. It may be said that there is no harm in that. On the other hand, it may be urged that these seventy thousand men, though imported into India and paid for by the Indians, could be used for the purposes of the whole Empire. This is true. That is, no doubt, an advantage, though it is one which is founded upon an immoral arrangement.

But have Englishmen taken note of the miserable condition of these seventy thousands of their countrymen? Englishmen have the reputation of being very much attached to one another. Colonel Olcott once told us that, one great virtue of the English people was that they would sacrifice everything for the sake of a countryman. If a countryman of theirs were oppressed in the remotest corner of the world, they would go there to avenge the wrong done to him, at any cost. This being the English instinct, how is it, then, that they are so callous to the miseries of their countrymen in India?

It is because there is no help for it. For the purpose of securing the absolute and perpetual sovereignty of India, the people of England have to shut their eyes to the true condition of British

soldiers in this country. These soldiers are brought from their homes to a distant and foreign land, the climate of which does not, of course, suit them; housed in barracks like horses in a stable, and treated as prisoners, never being permitted to go out of the precincts of the house without permission. Their only happiness consists in meat, drink, and the like, and in shooting birds; and even the latter pastime they are forbidden to indulge in, because of the danger to villagers which this pastime has been found to give rise to.

At a Railway station, two years ago, a few soldiers rested for a day. At about 4 P. M., some of them surrounded the clerk in charge of the Station, and insisted that they must have "three issues;" but, the clerk in reply said not "three "but "two." Of course, we could not understand what was the subject-matter of the dispute. On enquiry, however, we learnt that the "issues" meant issues of rum. We inquired whether Government paid for them; and we were told, the soldiers themselves had to pay for the drink. We again wanted to know what objection Government could have if they drank rum thrice, since they had to pay for the pleasure. In reply, we were told, that if they were given a free hand, they would drink away their earnings in a week, and would remain drunk day and night.

And it is not their fault that they seek to while

away time in drink. They have nothing to do, day and night. Ten thousand miles away from relations, friends and home; living as semi-prisoners in an uncongenial climate, under strict discipline, any breach of which means imprisonment and hard labour, there is no joy in the life of a British soldier. Other Englishmen who come to India may have their comforts for they can live an independent life and enjoy opportunities of making their pile. But the British soldier, we presume, gets only a shilling per day.

When the Purity party objected to a disgusting duty, which Government had taken upon itself, of supplying the animal requirements of the soldier, we did not, as a matter of fact, join in the cry with as much heart as it was our desire to do. For, we saw that the conditions of the existence of British soldiers in India required that they should be supplied with their animal wants. There was absolutely no help for it. Either the soldiers should be sent home, or none but married men should be brought here with their wives, or Government must take upon itself the disgusting duty of supplying them with "goodlooking" and "healthy" females.

The task which Government took upon itself, however, was such a dirty one that the Purity party easily gained the day; for, there was none who had the courage of openly supporting it.

Thus the Purity party gained; but the local authorities in India saw so much danger in the reform that they tried to evade the vote of Parliament by throwing dust in the eyes of the missionaries.

How that matter stands now we do not know; but, Anglo-Indian papers tell us that a large number of young Englishmen have for life been disabled by disease and have to be sent home invalided. Have Englishmen, who lose temper when they are told that they should associate with the natives of India for the government of the country, taken note as to how many of their own countrymen are killed in battle and by divers diseases, and invalided for life, simply because they shudder at the prospect of ever loosening, even slightly, the tight grip with which they now hold Hindustan?*

We said that Englishmen, generally speaking, are prepared to sacrifice everything for their Empire of India and the Indians approve of this determination, There are, however. Englishmen who by this "Empire of India" mean the perpetual and absolute sovereignty of this country. Mere supremacy in India will not satisfy them ; what they want is absolute sway, and that for ever and ever. The arrangement which Indians propose,

* As the articles with the above headings appeared in the AMRITA BAZAR PATRIKA the reader will excuse repetition here and there.

viz, supremacy for Englishmen in India and British citizenship for Indians, will not suit them; hence this perpetual and irreconcilable feud between the ruled and the rulers, is unfortunately getting more bitter day by day. The rulers will scarcely inaugurate a measure which has not for its object *perpetual* and *absolute* sovereignty for them; and, the natives of the soil naturally view every such measure with alarm and sometimes with indignation.

We have already seen what this desire for perpetual and absolute sovereignty has cost England and India. India at present is not the country of a nation, but the property of England. This Englishmen admit by calling it the brightest "jewel" in the British diadem, for a jewel is only a property. But so long India is regarded as a property, other nations will not cease to hanker after it. An English lord who had a beautiful mistress to whom he was devotedly attached, knew no peace on account of jealousy. He kept her strongly guarded, and never permitted her to go out of sight. He had no faith in the virtue of the woman; and, then, he saw that many other candidates for her favour were trying to win her affections. All these circumstances made the bewitched nobleman very miserable. Seeing the misery of her master, the lady told him that he could never hope to put any trust in her or to get

rid of his troublesome rivals until he had married her. "My dear," said she, addressing her lover, "marry me and then you will learn to put faith in me and your rivals will consider my person sacred, and they will never venture to cast wistful glances at me."

In the same manner, unless India be granted something like a national existence, other strong Powers will never cease to covet her possession. And until that is done, Englishmen will never learn to put any faith in the children of the soil. But, now, Englishmen do not trust the natives of India at all, and are constantly afraid of foreign aggression. Every movement of the natives of the soil, every movement of a foreign Power, creates a suspicion in their minds, which sometimes not only makes the great British nation look absurd, but also leads them to many suicidal and costly undertakings. This is only because India is regarded as a property. But, if India be raised to the status of the country of a nation, she will not only cling to England with affection, as her best friend, but others will also consider it a sacrilege to try to take possession of the country. There are innumerable small republics in the world, and, no one ever thinks of taking possession of any one of them; it is because they have each of them a national existence.

It is because India is regarded as a property

that its rulers have to guard it against foreign aggressors, as also against the natives of the country. Make India the country of a nation, give it a national existence, and the Russian bug-bear will cease to give any trouble,—India will become sacred in the eyes of even all aggressive nations.

The example shown by England and Russia have utterly demoralized Europe. In America, they do not know what it is to hold people under subjection. But, in Europe, every nation is after foreign conquests. In Europe, they have now all, generally speaking, practically become lawless. Lord Beaconsfield complacently remarked, " We have all of us room enough in Asia!" They are just now dividing Africa "as we divide a cake," said the American Ambassador in Paris. France is just now desolating Madagascar, and other European Powers look on unconcerned, or rather with envy. They are rather sorry that they themselves are not in the place of France! Of course, amongst themselves they have laws to protect property and person, but they have no regard for the lives or rights of human beings outside Europe. They will seize any body's country whenever they can, regardless of the fact that every nation has a natural right to a national existence. They will massacre weaker nations defending their hearth and home.

The piteous appeal of the Queen of Madagas-

car is calculated to move every heart which has a spark of humanity in it. But what of that? Earth-hunger has almost uprooted the sense of justice and the feeling of humanity from the European heart. Yet they, Europe, profess to believe in a God and a Redeemer. They have innumerable churches where they sit to pray for forgiveness for their sins. But, what forgiveness can there be for those who mow down patriots with their deadly weapons, as the French are now doing in Madagascar,—patriots who are fighting in defence of the honour of their families, for their corn-fields, their cattle, their children, and their national existence? Mind, in Europe, they are so just to themselves that they hang a man who takes the life of another. But, when others are concerned, they will not scruple to slay thousands and thousands, to rob them of their country and gold!

We are, however, only concerned with Englishmen who are decidedly the most moral and humane nation in Europe. The other day, a smart discussion was held by Englishmen in Calcutta, whether it was cruelty to cut the tail of a pigeon. But not a word was uttered by them when, say, about a thousand of the Swatis were killed in battle, while opposing the passage of our irresistible troops

Now, we fancy, every man killed beyond our borders, was, according to all right-thinking

Englishmen, a man unjustly massacred. It must have given a great shock to most Englishmen that a cruel necessity had led them to the massacre of brave patriots defending their home and hearth with stones, by means of their weapons made under scientific principles. These Englishmen mourned in silence, though they could not venture to utter a word. It must have occured to most of the Englishmen, that such deeds could not be regarded by God with pleasure, and they are opposed to the teachings inculcated by Jesus Christ.

A little consideration will show that it is this passionate desire for a perpetual and absolute sovereignty of India, that led to this act and others similar in nature. It is thus under the provision of God, one immoral act is followed by many other.

Europe is now an armed camp. Twenty-two millions of its best men have been reduced to the condition of bull-dogs. Europeans really do not trust one another; they never believe one another. The declarations of the highest men of a country will not be believed by the people of another country. As a matter of fact, they are all bent on deceiving one another. And how is this possible in nations, so well-blessed as Europeans are, with intelligence, education and the finest sentiments which mark out man from brutes? It is because earth-hunger has blunted their sentiments, and

they can scarcely perceive the unjustifiable character of their acts.

For a better appreciation of the subject we shall summarise the observations we have already made. We said that the people of India and their English rulers are now engaged in a ceaseless feud. They are not on cordial terms, and the estrangement is getting wider day by day. The rulers are day by day losing their sympathy for the people, and the people on the other hand, are losing their respect for, and confidence in, their English masters.

For an explanation of this condition of things, we said that this feud was solely due to a desire, on the part of the rulers, to hold an absolute and perpetual sway over this, what they call, "our Empire of India." The people, on the other hand, though they feel the absolute need of British sovereignty, also demand, along with it, British citizenship. Here we see a perfect accord on one point, *viz.*, as to the necessity for British supremacy. But there is a difference on the other point, *viz.*, that of British citizenship. The rulers will retain British supremacy but will not grant British citizenship, hence this difference.

The people of India revolted when they were asked to use cartridges which they believed contained the fat of the swine and the cow. The British people were led to come to the conclusion by that

Mutiny, that the best course for them would be to grant British citizenship to Indians. And, as a matter of fact, it was granted to the people of India by a Royal Charter in 1858. But, there is now no longer a disposition on the part of the rulers of the land to abide by the Queen's Proclamation. It has become now quite apparent to the meanest intellect, that the Proclamation is considered, by Englishmen in general, as a mistake, and such as should not be given effect to.

At the present moment, the natives of India do not enjoy the privileges of British citizens. They are not permitted to make laws, nay, not even to administer the laws made by their English masters. The laws are made by Englishmen and are administered by Englishmen. The people are taxed by Englishmen and the revenues are spent by Englishmen. The natives of the soil have not even the privilege of managing their own petty village affairs, or of being tried by their peers even in the pettiest of cases.

The Indians expected the great boon of British citizenship to come upon them in time. They were not in a hurry about it. They wanted a be-ginning. But that beginning never came. They formed themselves into a National Congress when they saw that there was no prospect of getting anything without agitation. They thought that the organization would prove conclusively, that

the natives of India were earnest in their demands; that they stuck to British rule and did not want a severance; and that they were competent to take upon themselves some share of the work of administration.

The Indians in this effort expected help from their English masters. They had the firm conviction that Englishmen who always loved fair play—who, in spite of a rough exterior, were generous at heart, and always on the side of struggling humanity trying to get out of their difficulties—would come forward to lend them a helping hand in their efforts. But some petty, immediate and fanciful advantages led them to range against this national movement. Instead of helping the disorganized Indians,—disorganised because of foreign rule—Englishmen here took upon themselves to throw obstacles in their way. They considered it a triumph if the Congress failed in any point. The rulers, in short, are not disposed to lend the Indians any help in their efforts to learn some sort of self-government.

Have Indians any prospect of getting anything twenty-five years hence?—Fifty years hence?—A hundred years hence? There is no such indication, however, on the part of the rulers to inspire the hope that Indians will have, at any future period, the prospect of enjoying any one of the privileges of British citizenship. No measure

of Government now-a-days indicates any relaxation of hold on the people. On the other hand, almost every measure of Government now a days shows a desire for a firmer hold, if that is possible upon the people.

It is this disposition on the part of the rulers, that leads Indians to grumble, and it is this complaint, on the part of the Indians, which leads the English rulers to feel unsympathetically towards the people of this country.

There are kind-hearted Englishmen who try to soothe the Indians by a vague assurance that they would be blessed with political privileges when they showed their fitness for them. But this assurance does not now carry conviction. If the rulers had any serious intention of gradually incorporating the Indians in the ranks of British citizens, they would have given the latter a chance. They would have given them chances, and regarded their first failures with a lenient eye. When Lord Ripon inaugurated his scheme of local self-government, he remarked that failures on the part of the Indians were expected and that the Government should make ample allowances for such shortcomings in the beginning. This measure of local self-government,by the bye, was the last act of the Government of India which showed any sympathy for the people. Lord Ripon was hissed out of India for his "pro-native" tendencies, and this

suicidal act, by the Anglo-Indian rulers here, was a signal for the inauguration of a policy of repression all along the line,—repression in every direction.

As we said before, no chances are given now; on the other hand, we see an attempt everywhere to cry down everything done by an Indian. Mr. —, Commissioner of the Presidency Division, had to deal with two Indian Civilians when writing his Annual Report; and both of them were put down by him as worthless.

The hope, however, once held out that Indians would be treated more and more as fellow subjects as they advanced in the knowledge of European methods, was annihilated by the attitude of the rulers of the land towards the National Congress. Here was an honest attempt on the part of Indians to extricate themselves from an abject condition. Here was an honest attempt on the part of the leaders to throw in their lot with the British nation and stick to them for ever. But were these honest and laudable efforts hailed with joy by their rulers? No! Every effort was made by the irresistible rulers of the land to see that Indians never succeeded. Dissension was sown in their ranks; the leaders were sought to be won over by offers of reward and threats of punishment. Everyone knows that now-a-days no man of property

ventures to show any active sympathy for the Congress.

What the rulers of the land have reserved for the Indians is not only British sovereignty but an absolute rule, and not only an absolute rule but a perpetual one. This absolute and perpetual rule must endure for ever and ever; and, this is what the present policy of the Government clearly indicates.

We have asked several Englishmen of a liberal mind, both here and in England, to explain what their real intentions are as regards India. We have got, however, different replies from different parties. One said that he could not justify, on moral grounds, the ostracism of the natives of the soil from all share in the government of the country; but he is only one out of thirty millions of Englishmen who rule India, and he is obliged to take his share of the responsibility of the moral wrong. In short, he had no hopes to offer us. Another said that such a state of things could never continue for ever, and that relief was bound to come in course of time. His reply also did not contain anything definite; he left everything to chance. Another pious Christian, a philanthropist, told us, in reply to our question, that Indians had no right to complain; for, they had now a better rule than they had ever enjoyed before.

Now, this is exactly what we are told often,—not only by very good men in England but also by a large number of Englishmen here. We are thus asked to accept that we are now far better off than we ever were before. But, do the authorities, who rule India, believe it? Let them first believe it themselves and then it will be time for them to ask us to accept the view that India is better off now than it was ever before.

But do they believe the statement themselves? Why do they, then, entertain such a profound distrust for the Indians? Their actions show that they have no faith in Indian good-will, and that they entertain the notion that Indians are in a state of deep disaffection, and are only biding their time for a shaking-off of the foreign rule. Every action of theirs proves this suspicion of the Indians. Why did they disarm Indians if they had any faith in the good-will of the people? Can the annals of the world show another instance of two hundred and fifty millions of people disarmed and practically emasculated for ever? Why this terrible and unparalleled punishment? Englishmen are too intelligent not to know that, by this universal disarmament, they have done immense mischief to themselves. Indians could furnish ten millions of soldiers to the rulers of the land,—soldeirs, efficient and cheap. With such a horde, and with their unparalleled generalship and inexhaustible re-

sources, Englishmen could have defied the world. But why are they emasculating their own people and thus undermining their own strength?

They are fully aware of the mischief that they are doing to themselves by this emasculating process. But, their unconquerable suspicion leads them to it. This suspicion could never have got such a strong hold of their minds, if they had any faith in their own contention that, Indians have got now a better rule than they ever had before, or a very good rule, or anything like a good rule.

This distrust of the Indians has led the rulers of the land to undergo many such immense sacrifices. For the disarmament of the natives of the soil is a sacrifice, both to the ruled and rulers. Everyone knows that it is the forward policy of the Government which has almost ruined India. It has brought upon India an additional burden of twenty thousand British soldiers. To this forward policy we owe all our inglorious and costly border wars. To it we owe roads and railways through inaccessible regions, and forts and fortresses, maintained at immense cost, in distant countries. This forward policy has added something like ten millions per annum to the burdens of a famished people. It has been the cause of the loss of lives of innumerable men, Indian and European, and cattle, the chief wealth of the Indians.

And do you know to what mainly we owe this forward policy? We quote the following sentences from the comments of an English newspaper on a recent paper of Col. Hanna:—

"Colonel Hanna recommends, as a line of defence, Jacobabad, Multan, Peshawar. As the writer in *The United Service Magazine* points out, 'with Russia established in Afghanistan, we should be leaving constant intrigues and plots going on against us in India,' and retreat or defeat outside our border would raise a horde in our rear of every discontented man in India. *Civil and Military Gazette* recently showed how necessary it is to keep the actual fighting away from India itself. This is also the view of "An officer of the Indian staff corps,' and, we heartily endorse it."

So we owe this forward policy to the necessity of "keeping the actual fighting away from India." Is not this ridiculous? Is it not calculated to produce shrieks of laughter amongst Indians? By marching forward to meet the enemy, we take upon ourselves all the difficulties which an invading army will have to overcome. By sustaining a defeat far away from our base of operations, we risk the animosity of the fierce and barbarous people in our rear through whose country we had marched. But, all these dangers are nothing compared with the other. And, what is it? The danger is, as the *Civil and Military Gazette* has it,

"if the English sustain a defeat on the border, the whole of India will rise against them!" So the animosity of the blood-thirsty barbarians is nothing compared to the animosity of the gentle Indians, who are alleged to be enjoying a rule the like of which was never done before! Does not such a state of the mind show that suspicion has made sober and intelligent Englishmen lose their senses?

A belief, in the innate goodness of the rule given to India, is incompatible with such unconquerable and profound distrust of the people. It is not mere suspicion that the authorities feel for the people of India; it is something like a mania. Mr. Balfour, in his speech at Glasgow, said, speaking in regard to Chitral, that "the day we lose our prestige will be the fore-runner of the loss of the Empire." Mr. Balfour, a master of the Empire, echoes but a generally-accepted sentiment. The belief is entertained almost universally, and it is oftentimes openly declared too, that, the British Government in India has no other basis to stand upon than its *prestige*. Such a view does not confirm the statement that Indians have got a better rule now than they ever enjoyed before. On the other hand, the unusual importance given to what is called *prestige*, goes to suggest that British Government has no hold whatsoever upon the people on account of its intrinsic merits. So, it

owes its strength and existence to deceptions!

What does this ostracism of the natives of the soil from the military service prove, except that the rulers have no faith in them? Mussalman Emperors trusted Hindu Generals, and the Russians trust Mussalman Generals selected from among their Mussalman subjects; but, the English rulers of India will not trust an Indian in the military service, though they declare that they have given a better rule to India than the Russians ever gave to their Mussalman subjects, or Mussalman Emperors did to their Hindu subjects. This does not show that they have any sincere faith in the excellence of their own rule. Jealous husbands oftentimes act in a ludicrous manner; but, the persecuted wife does not find anything pleasant in the mad pranks of her lord. The steps taken by the authorities to guard the Empire from their own people, have a ridiculous aspect; only they are too serious for the people to derive any enjoyment from them. For every two Sepoys, one British soldier is imported to keep guard! The Sepoys are wanted to keep the people under control, and the British soldiers are wanted to keep the Sepoys under control!

Here we have a complicated machinery, wheels within wheels, which not only make the whole thing cumbrous and costly, but almost

worthless for the purposes of any substantial work. India cannot show tangible progress, because of this complicated machinery which leads it on.

We said that England could raise ten millions of soldiers from India; but, then there is this difficulty. Would not these ten millions require also the services of five millions of British soldiers? But, where are these five millions to be got? And so England cannot utilize the forces that it is capable of raising in India.

Thus, what we see is suspicion everywhere, and that this suspicion is eating into the vitality of the nation. It is emasculating the Indians,—it is undermining the real basis of this gigantic Empire.

And, do they not watch with a jealous eye the sale of sulphur? And, why? It is because sulphur forms a component part of gun-powder! How is it that even their own Indian soldier is not trusted with artillery? Are not these ridiculous precautions due to an unconquerable suspicion owing to an unalterable conviction that, Indians do not now enjoy as good a rule as they deserve?

We then come to the larger question of the importation of seventy-five thousand British soldiers. We implore every Englishman to think over the actual condition of these brave English soldiers, kept confined in barracks. John Brown relates in the *Asian* a story that he had heard

from an Indian coachman. This is what the coachman, an Indian, told him :—

" The most curious incident during my service occurred when I was on the Umballa-Kalka Road. It was in the hot weather and in broad day-light, when I took up a passenger at the Umballa Station ; he threw away an empty bottle. Presently he produced another from his portmanteau, and finished half of it at a draught. A few miles further, he emptied it and commenced a third bottle. He then attacked the syce with his sword and the man jumped off the tonga, and bolted. I felt inclined to run away myself. At the next stage, which was half way to Kalka, he left the tonga and went shrieking into the jungle. As he did not return for a long time, we went to look for him and found him gasping for breath under a tree. We gave him water ; but, he died before we could reach the tonga. I then drove the corpse back to Umballa to the Police Station ; and the Judge Sahib, who held the enquiry, was very severe with me. God knows why ; for, I had done my duty according to my lights.

"What was he drinking?"—asked the Judge of me.

"Khodawand," I said, "I am a Brahmin, and don't drink spirits, I don't know."

"Was it sweet?"

"Was it bitter?"

"I am a Brahmin, and don't know."

"Was it sour?"

"I am a Brahmin, and don't know."

"Then he said I was a fool; and when asked why didn't I take away the bottles, I said I was a coachman, small of stature, and the Sahib was a big man with a drawn sword. Then they said *jau*, and I went. Your Honour will see that we are already at Kâlka, and in good time for the train. When your Honour comes again, if you will ask for Sarda Ram, it will give me great pleasure to drive you; there is no one I would rather drive than your Honour, not even Lat Brassfoot himself whom your Honour much resembles. *Khudda huzur ko Lat Kare!*"

And said the coachman: "How can I tell what he was drinking? I am a Brahmin." What a commentary this upon the superior enlightenment of the Christians! But, it is not the fault of the officer that he died of drinking. In India, British soldiers,—even officers,—have to drink, in order to make their existence bearable.

Let us view this question from another standpoint. There are 42,000 soldiers in Bengal, who are unmarried and only 1,300 who are married. There are 11,000 in Madras and 12,000 in Bombay who are unmarried, and 650 in Madras, and 360 in Bombay who are married. The percentage of married to the actual strength in the three

Presidencies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay, is thus a little more or less than 3, 4 and 2 respectively. So, here we have a total of 68,000 unmarried British soldiers in *India*. *It* is a pity that the significance of this fact is ignored, nay, sought to be concealed. And, does not this perpetual political disability of Indians need the practical banishment of seventy-five thousand of Englishmen to a foreign country in an uncongenial climate? We see here seventy-five thousand Englishmen, who are young and unmarried, kept confined in barracks in the deadly climate of India. The best course for Englishmen, who are so great patriots and who possess such strong humanitarian principles, is to send these men home at once.

It may, however, be urged that if these seventy-five thousand Englishmen were sent home, there would be none to guard the Empire. Why, Indians will do it! Why will Indians not do it when, by the admission of the rulers of the Empire themselves, the people of this country have now got such a good rule as they never enjoyed before? If Indians, under such circumstances, rise against British authority,—if Hindus and Mussalmans can forget their mutual differences, which is an impossible supposition; if they can find a centre to rally round, which is another impossible supposition,

why should not they govern the country themselves? The only justification for the occupation of the country by the English is that the natives of the country will cut one another's throats, if left to themselves. But if the Indians can organize themselves into a power capable of governing themselves, surely England would have no excuse to remain in the country at all. But let not the big-Englander have any fear on this score; there is no chance whatever for Indians for an existence separate from the English.

WE have now to give some account of the people of the country, for whom the rulers of the land would vote eternal disability. Now, Indians are not barbarians, nor are they worse than the Chinese, Japanese, Egyptians, or Persians. It is altogether an absurd contention that Indians are not competent even to be entrusted with a small share in the management of their own affairs. The *Daily News* of London says:

" After His Highness Ranjitsinhji, no triumph of oriental genius in a novel field can be really surprising. If a Rajpoot is our master at cricket, a Baboo may beat us in the less difficult art of Romance. And this is exactly what has occurred. According to Miss Miriam Singleton Knight, who expresses herself in *The Indian Magazine and Review*, the once-admired author of the Waverley Novels must strike his flag to 'Babu

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, now, alas! no more."

Who knew before that a Hindu would excite the admiration of the English people for his triumph in cricket,—the national game of the English? Luckily, Ranjitsinhji had a chance. It is manifestly unjust to vote incompetence without giving a fair trial.

For thousands of years Hindus had managed their own affairs and ruled their own Empires. Alexander found that Hindus could fight, and he had to give up his attempt to penetrate into the country. The Hindu power was broken by the Mussalman hordes from the West. For this they have no need to be ashamed. If the Hindus failed to resist the advance of the Mussalman inroad, so did the Christians also in Europe. It is true that Christians regained what they had lost; but, so also did the Hindus. When the English came into this country, the Hindus were supreme. They succeeded in regaining what they had lost; and just when they were founding their Empire on a permanent basis they were disturbed in their arrangements by the appearance of Europeans in the field. The English had to fight for the Empire of India with the Hindus and not with the Mussalmans.

"Pahari" thus wrote in the columns of the *London Spectator* in 1893:

Nominally, we took over the Empire of Hindoostan from the Mahomedans; but as a fact, our most important and hard-won conquests were from Hindus, such as the Mahrattas, Goorkhas, Rajpoots, and Sikhs. The Mahomedan empire was effete and a mere name when we began to advance far inland, and all over India the Hindus had got the upper hand. If we had not stepped in, it is very doubtful whether the Mahomedans would have ever regained power; they would certainly not have done so without the aid of a large Mahomedan invasion from beyond the Indus, and the chance which such an invasion would have had of success, would have been small. The old invasions succeeded because undisciplined hordes fought against undisciplined hordes of poorer material; but the Mahrattas and Sikhs had learnt to some extent, how to drill and manœuver troops according to the European military system: The Sikhs conquered and held all the Afghan country outside the mountains.

It is not, therefore, quite correct to say that but for the English the Mussalmans would have cut the Hindus to pieces!

The English came when Hindus had not been able to recover completely from the shock of the destructive Mussalman occupation. This second shock broke them down completely. To ascertain what Hindus were like in the early days, we have to see whether there is yet any State in India which had not been bled and weakened by the Mussalman onslaught. The only State which escaped this destructive flood of Mussalman occupation, was Nepal. So when the English went to fight with the Nepalese, they found what the Hindus were like in early days,

not demoralized by defeat and disaster. We shall here describe that first brush of the English with a handful of Nepalese, some three hundred in number, badly armed, badly protected, and weighted with the disadvantage of the presence of women and children.

War was declared against Nepal on the 1st November, 1814. A little before this declaration, it was resolved to make a grand military demonstration for the purpose of over-awing the enemy. For this, four separate regiments had been ordered to march simultaneously from four different military stations. Major-General Gillespi commanded one of them.

On the 24th October, Gillespie's regiment reached Dehra Dun. Gillespie was not with his force. Colonel Mouli had the command.

About three miles and a half from Dehra Dun was the little fortress of Kulunga, situated in a nook of the hills of Nalapani. It was something like a stone-henge,—a small table-land surrounded by large blocks of stone which acted as the fort-wall,—which again was protected by a thick range of *sal* trees.

Finding the British force at his doors, Balabhadra Singh, nephew of Amar Singh, the Chief of Nahan, had taken refuge in this fortress of Nature with a few chosen followers, not exceeding three hundred. This was unbearable to Colonel

Mouli,—the hill-fortress being within four miles of the great military station of Dehra Dun. Colonel Mouli had reached Dehra Dun on the 24th. On that very night, he had written to Balabhadra to surrender, and had received a proud reply of meeting him on the battle-field. Next morning, the active British General was marching up hill. He reached the base of the Nalapani Hills, and fixed his battery there; but, when he saw that, with all his efforts, he could make no impression upon the enemy, he sent news to Gillespie at Saharanpur, and the Major-General made his appearance on the scene the next day, the 26th October. In two or three days he completed his preparations for the siege. Four detachments, under Colonel Carpenter, Captain Faust, Major Kelly and Captain Campbell, surrounded the place from four sides; and a regiment under Major Ludlow was kept in reserve.

The siege began. The discharge from the British battery was returned by volleys of musketry, which wrought immense havoc amongst British forces. Though the British cannons did much harm amongst the brave three hundred, they showed no sign whatever of giving way. The determined manner in which the post was defended by a small number of men against tremendous odds, guided by the best Generals of the age, created a mingled feeling of surprise and indignation

in the minds of the besiegers. The leaders of the siege forgot themselves; and, in attempting to scale the walls, Lieutenant Ellis and Major-General Gillespie lost their lives!

The command then devolved on Colonel Mouli as the senior officer. He found that it would be rashness to proceed further in the siege, and that his prudent course would be to make a hasty retreat. This he did, and asked for re-inforcements and a battering train from Delhi. It took a month's time for the train to arrive; but, there was no help for it. The expected re-inforcements and battering train reaching him on the 24th November, a second attack was made the next day, and it was repulsed for a second time.

Meantime, the water-supply of the besieged had fallen short. The only supply was from the water-falls outside the fortress near the British encampment at Nalapani, and this had virtually been cut off. In the midst of the shots which were rapidly decimating their numbers, the groans of the wounded, the cries of the women and children for water, the besieged had to defend their apology of a fort in which breeches had been made on all sides, from an overwhelming force, thirsting for their blood. They, however, did not mind the shots of the besiegers as the burning thirst which overcame them and all their dependants. From three hundred the number had been

reduced to seventy. They might have then surrendered; and, their generous enemy, filled with admiration at their noble conduct, would have warmly accepted it. But the besieged heroes disdained to yield, and admit defeat!

On the last day of the month, when the batteries of the British troops were hurrying on their work, and volleys after volleys from the Gurkha musketry responded to them, there was a pause of a few minutes in the ranks of the besieged. Suddenly, the iron gates were flung open, and out came the immortal seventy "with drawn swords in their hands, guns on their arms, the *kukri* or *bhojali* hanging from their belts, and the *chakra* or wheel resplendent on their head-dress, led by their chief, Balabhadra,—brave, erect, cheerful, and in his measured military gait:" and, before the astounded British force had time to reflect, they had cut right through the line, drank to their hearts' content from the springs of Nalapani, and in no time disappeared without anyone of them being hurt!

The English razed Kulunga to the ground. The English historian of Dehra Dun, R. C. Williams, B. A., C. S., thus remarks on the incident: "Such was the conclusion of the defence of Kulunga,—a feat of arms worthy of the best of chivalry, conducted with a heroism almost suffici-

ent to palliate the disgrace of our own reverses." And in the silent forests at Dehra Dun, on the banks of the river Riechpana, stands a small monument, "as a tribute of respect for our gallant Adversary Balabhadra Singh."

The heroism of Balabhadra could safely be likened to that of the English in Crimea. And, is it generous and worthy of the leading nation of the world to reserve for this unfortunate race perpetual disability?

Dr. Hunter, in his "Rural Bengal," says that "the conception of the Vedas regarding the immortality of the soul, is beautiful and sublime." The Vedas were written many thousands of years ago when the races, who would put down Hindus for hewers of wood and drawers of water, had no existence whatever. There are many eminent philosophers in Europe who are of opinion that the author of the *Geeta* is the greatest philosopher that the world has ever seen. The six schools of philosophy, developed in India, are so subtle and so deep that they are, according to Professor Cowell, calculated to make "the European head dizzy." There is no doubt of it that Hindus gave religion to the vast majority of mankind. It is known to all that they civilised China and Japan, the latter of which is now considered equal to any great Power in Europe in all those resources which make a nation great.

Let us see how our forefathers left us, and how we have changed by contact with the Western people. This is what that eminent philosopher, Professor Max Muller, says in his "Psychological Religion" :—

So far as we can judge, a large class of people in India, not only the priestly class but the nobility also, not only men but women also, never looked upon their life on earth as something real. What was real to them, was the invisible,---the life to come. What formed the theme of their conversations, what formed the subject of their meditations, was the real, that alone lent some kind of reality to this unreal phenomenal world. Whoever was supposed to have caught a new ray of truth, was visited by young and old, was honoured by princes and peasants, nay, was looked upon as holding a position much above that of kings and princes.

In the above, Professor Max Muller describes the Hindus. Let us see how he describes the rest of the world :—

Our idea of life on earth has always been that of struggle for existence, a struggle for power and dominion, for wealth and enjoyment. These are the ideas which dominate the history of all nations whose history is known to us. Our own sympathies also are almost entirely on that side.

Below the philosopher compares the Hindus with the rest of the world :—

Was it so very unnatural for the Hindus, endowed as they were with a transcedental intellect, to look upon this life not as an arena for gladiatorial strife and combat, or as a market for cheating and huckstering, but as a resting-place, a mere waiting room at a station or a journey leading them from the known to the unknown, but exciting, for that very reason their utmost curiosity as to whence they come and whither they were going?

It was, we believe, Sir Charles Elliott who was pleased to confess that, "he could understand the Mussalmans but he could not understand the Hindus." In the same manner, the Hindus cannot understand their fellows in other parts of the world. The reason is that the instincts of the Hindus are quite different from those of other nations.

The Hindus, however, suffered for being better than their neighbours. We quote the same philosopher :—

> I confess it has always seemed to me one of the saddest chapters in the history of the world to see the early inhabitants of India, who knew nothing of the rest of the world, of the mighty Empires of Egypt and Babylon, and of their wars and conquests,—who wanted nothing from the outside world and were happy and content in their own earthly paradise,—to see these happy people suddenly overrun by foreign warriors, whether Persians, Greeks or Macedonians, or, at a later time, Scythians, Mahomedans, Mongolians and Christians, and conquered for no fault of theirs, except that they had neglected to cultivate the art of killing their neighbours.

Why did the Hindus suffer when they harmed none? Says Professor Max Muller :—

> They themselves never wished for conquests,—they simply wished to be left alone and to be allowed to work out their view of life which was contemplative and joyful, though deficient in one point, namely, the art of self-defence and destruction.

From the above it will be made plain why Porus was surprised when Alexander asked him how he should be treated. Porus had no

idea that kings fought for material greed like common robbers. The Hindus learnt from sad experience that it would not do to grow philosophers alone, and that they must nourish brute force for the purpose of their very existence. How they succeeded in this attempt, will appear from the letter of an Englishman who called himself "a Pahari," which appeared in the London *Spectator*, and which is quoted in page 201.

As a matter of fact, when the present rulers appeared on the scene, the Hindus were the paramount power in India. So, if the Hindu could speculate, they also subsequently learnt to fight.

Now we must say that the Hindus were quite right in their contention that, to quote Professor Max Muller, "this life is not an arena for gladiatorial strife and combat, or a market for cheating and huckstering, but a resting-place, a mere waiting room at a station,on a journey'' to the permanent home.

When the vote for Simultaneous Examinations in England and India was rescinded, it was done under the openly-declared apprehension that, if Hindus and Englishmen were given equal chance, the former would defeat the latter all along the line.

Would it not be a great pity to put such a nation under everlasting disability? What English-

man can contemplate, without a shudder, the idea of reducing hundreds of millions of human beings, fully his peers in nobler qualities of man, to eternal political slavery ? The act would be a stupendous wrong and a piece of unparalleled immorality. An act like that would never be pleasing to the Father of all nations, whose active interference in the affairs of nations is proved by the punishment which inevitably follows, sooner or later, every act of national immorality.

MILITARY EXAMINATION

[*The Civilian officials are said to belong to species sub-janta. Which means that they are conceited, and they believe that they are not only competent to perform any act, from casting accounts to casting cannons, but they can do it better than even those who are trained in the particular business. Sir Ashley Eden, a Civilian, began life as an Assistant in Bengal but for some time he was put in charge of the salt operations in Orissa. Latterly he was raised to the position of the Lieutenant-Governor of the province. And when an army commission was appointed, Sir A. Eden was selected as its President and Captain Collen as its Secretary. It was to ridicule this arrangement that the following skit was written at the time, that is, in the year 1879.*]

Sir Ashley Eden had studied all night and was yet poring over a big folio, when he was interrupted by Captain Collen who arrived unannounced. The Captain had interviewed His Honor the day before. It is now universally known that an army Commission has been appointed to inquire into the military charges of the Empire and to suggest means for the curtailment of expenditure. Sir Ashley Eden has been appointed President, and Captain Collen, Secretary

to the Commission. The Captain has come down from Simla to arrange matters with His Honor, the President.

"Collen, I am glad you have come," says His Honor. "You know very well, as I told you yesterday, that I am not familiar with your military matters." Collen silent. His Honor continues: "I have sent for you to teach me. I know my duties won't require much technical knowledge of the military science, but yet I must not appear before my colleagues as an ignorant man, do you see. I have also no mind to be bullied by the witnesses I may have to examine." Collen is still silent. His Honor continues: "I have already learnt much, and, I think, I am now quite competent to undertake my duties. But I must first pass an examination before a military man clever like yourself."

Secretary.—Shall I commence just now?

President.—No, not yet—give me another night. Let me refresh my memory. Come early to-morrow, and you shall find me ready to receive you.

Secretary.—Shall I come with a written set of questions?

President.—No, no, don't do that. Let the examination be *viva voce.* You need not go deep into the matter. Ask me the meanings of terms, etc., etc., and that will do for my purpose.

Collen withdrew with a bow, and Sir Ashey Eden opened Dumbleton's military spelling book. The subject-matter of the book was extremely dry, and His Honor found it a hard task to go through it. But Sir Ashley Eden was a man of resolution, and he summoned all his patience to aid him in his task. Time flew rapidly. The clock struck midnight, and he fancied that Dumbleton himself was standing before him with a cane in his hand. But suddenly his fancy took another turn. He fancied that he was surrounded by military officers, with colossal figures and angry faces, demanding his passport. At another time he fancied that a witness was laughing at his ignorance. In short, the matter was that, though His Honor fancied he was awake all along, he was in fact sleeping, though not profoundly, and dreaming upon a subject nearest to his heart.

Just as the clock struck six, His Honor awoke with a start. He found Dumbleton lying before him open at page 3. He was rubbing his eyes to collect his scattered senses, when Collen suddenly appeared before him. There was confusion and anxiety visible in the face of His Honor, though he tried to conceal them. Collen himself was silent. "Go on, Collen, I am ready," said His Honor rather nervously. Collen, who said nothing, immediately put the 1st question.

Question.—What is the number of officers in a regiment?

President.—This question shews, Collen, that you have come deliberately with the intention of confusing me. What have I to do with the number of officers? Ask me the meanings of terms.

Q.—State the relative ranks and duties of the officers.

A.—As for the duties of officers I have nothing to do with them. As for the relative ranks, first comes the Commander-in-Chief who stands in the position of Governor-General, at the head of all. The secoad in rank is the Lieutenant-General, who like myself, is the Lieutenant-Governor of the army. The third is the Colonel. The fourth is the Captain who sails ships like yourself.

The fact is, whenever Sir Ashley Eden came to India in ships, he found them managed by an officer, who was called Captain. He, therefore, fancied that as Collen was a Captain, he was necessarily in charge of a ship.

Q.—What position does a Major hold?

A.—You mean Surgeon Major? He amputates arms, and extracts bullets.

Q.—What is a regiment?

A.—Regimen is a grammatical term. It also means the systematic use of food and drugs.

Q.—What is an adjutant?

A.—The gigantic crane. We have plenty of them in Calcutta.

Q.—What do you understand by a company?

A.—When friends assemble together I call it a company, let others say whatever they like; and when there is good liquor I call it boon company.

Q.—What do you understand by staff corps?

A.—Staff means a stick, and corps who carry sticks on their shoulders.

Q.—What is a battalion?

A.—A male mare.

Collen is a silent man, and very respectful. Hitherto he had heard his master's answers without any comment or even the movement of muscle. But when his master described a battalion to be only a male mare he could contain himself no longer. He said meekly:—"Hitherto I have at least understood what Your Honor said, but I do not understand what Your Honor means by a male mare, a mare being always female."

President.—Quite true. I mean a male horse, though the adjective male is unnecessary, a horse being always male. But stop, what is the term?

Secretary.—Battalion.

President.—Battalion? Well I was confounding it with the term "Stallion!" Well, I shall remember the word and see if Dumbleton helps me.

Q.—What is a brigade?

A.—You mean a brigand, he is a robber like Arabi Pasha.

Q.—May I ask Your Honor's idea of a mess?

A.—A mess is a confusion or an embarrassment.

Q.—Of course, Your Honor knows the difference between a sharpnell and a shell, a muzzle-loader and a breech-loader.

A.—Wait, let me see. A shell, of course, I know. I have seen plenty on the sea-shore. What a sharpnell is I don't think I can make out. I shall consult Dumbleton. A breech-loader and muzzle-loader must be contradictory terms. For while the Bengalees talked of breach of faith, we muzzled their press.

Q.—What are the sappers and miners?

A.—What suppers are I shall show you this evening if you come hungry. As for minors, well, I can't make out what connection there is between suppers and young men who have yet to attain majority.

Q.—What does Your Honor understand by a cadet?

A.—A younger brother, of a younger son.

Q.—Brevet?

A.—I fancy it is a musical term used in martial music.

Q.—Who are the Field-Officers?

A.—I think this is a question which has no

bearing upon the subject. A magistrate is a field officer when he is on tour, so is the Divisional Commissioner, and so is myself. And so are also other heads of departments who have to do the duty of inspection in the Muffasil. But a Field-Officer properly so-called, is a Surveyor or a District Engineer.

President.—Have you any more questions to ask?

Secretary.—No, I have done.

President.—But, Collen, you did not make any remarks upon my answers. I think I shall do. What do you say?

But Collen was silent.

ASIA, THE CHOSEN PLACE OF GOD.

ONE grand idea occupies the minds of Western nations, namely, how to kill the largest number of men in the safest manner, and in the shortest time. Spencer, the great English aeronaut, has, it is said, beaten his Mexican rival, Santos Dumont, and given evidence of his perfect control over his air-machine. When interviewed, he said that "while I was proceeding in my balloon, I was throwing balls; and I was convinced that I could thus throw bombs in a city and destroy it." So his success led him not to think of the goodness of God, who has given so many valuable privileges to man, but to the central idea round which the Western minds rotate. Ordinary men in Eastern countries think that aerial navigation, when it becomes an accomplished fact, would mean the progress of humanity. In the west they are, however, perfecting the air-machine for the purpose of destroying cities by throwing bombs into them from a safe distance!

"Where would you like to go," asks the pious priest of a thoroughly worldly-minded and hard-hearted layman, whom he was trying to lead to God,—"to heaven or to hell?"

Layman: I can't answer your question until you answer mine: Where did our late king go,—heaven or hell?

Priest: Certainly to hell, for he was a tyrant.

Layman: Where did the late A. B., (a very rich and powerful nobleman,) go?

Priest: He was a bad man, certainly he also went to hell.

Layman: Where have Alexander, Napoleon and other heroes, who deluged the earth with human gore, gone?

Priest: I am sorry to say that they must have gone to hell, for God commands men never to kill, and this command is unconditional.

Layman: And where did that great Spanish patriot go, who, by his bold feat, wrested Cuba from its native chief? He was received as a friend by the chief to whom he had gone to pay a visit on horseback. He presented a pair of bracelets which he kindly put on the wrists of his host, the chief. They were not, however, bracelets but hand-cuffs. He then forced the chief to mount a horse and thus carried him a prisoner; and in this manner Cuba was won. Did he not go to Heaven for this eminent service to his country, for he won an empire for his people by this bold act?

Priest: No, he must have gone to hell.

Layman: (Pondering) It seems that hell, like America, is the most flourishing place in God's

creation. Since every one has gone there, surely I too should like to go there, and Join the great men of the country.

Hell is no doubt a flourishing place now. And who are they that are now increasing its population? They are men who, when they have learnt to control their air-machines, would, without humbly thanking God for His mercy to puny man, utilize the discovery for the destruction of His creatures. It is Europe mainly which is sending colony after colony to the internal region.

In the above, we only echo the voice of one of the greatest of Englishmen, Beaconsfield, who is now no more. Eva is a Jewess and Tancred an English youth, a Duke's son. These are the two principal characters in Lord Beaconsfield's "Tancred". The Jewess and the Duke's son complain of their respective lots. The Jewess considers the lot of Asia unhappy; the young Englishman considers that of Europe unhappy, and hence the following dialogue ensues:

"Unhappy Asia!" said Tancred, "Do you call it unhappy Asia? This land of divine deeds and divine thoughts! Its slumber is more vital than the waking life of the rest of the globe, as the dream of the genius is more precious than the vigils of ordinary men. Unhappy Asia, do you call it? It is the unhappiness of Europe over which I mourn."

"Europe, that has conquered Hindustan, protects Persia and Asia Minor, affects to have saved Syria,' said Eva, with some bitterness,—"oh! what can we do against Europe?"

"Save it," said Tancred.

"We cannot save ourselves. What means have we to save others?" Said Eva.

"The same," replied Tancred, "you have ever exercised, Divine Truth. Send forth a great thought, as you have done before from Mount Senai, from the villages of Gaillee, from the deserts of Arabia, and you may again remodel all their institution, change their principles of action, and breathe a new spirit into the whole scope of their existence."

"I have sometimes dreamed such dreams," murmured Eva looking down. "No, no," she exclaimed, raising her head, after a moment's pause, "it is impossible. Europe is too proud, with its new command over nature, to listen even to prophets. Levelling mountains, riding without horse, sailing without winds. How can these men believe that there is any power, human or divine, superior to themselves?"

"As for their command over nature," said Tancred, "let us see how it will operate in a second deluge. Command over nature! Why the humblest root that serves for the food of man has mysteriously withered throughout Europe, and they are

already pale at the possible consequences. This slight eccentricity of that nature, which they boast they can command, has already shaken empires and may decide the fate of nations. No, gentle lady, Europe is not happy. Amid its false excitement, its bustling invention, and its endless toil, a profound melancholy broods over its spirit and gnaws at its heart. In vain they baptize their tumult by the name of progress; the whisper of a demon is ever asking them, 'progress, from whence and to what?' Excepting those who still cling to your Araban creeds, Europe, that quarter of the globe to which God has never spoken,—Europe is without consolation."

Europe is powerful, but it is unhappy. The soul of a European is like that of a tiger in a cage, always trying to escape through unsuccessfully—always after something, what he does not know. At present European nations think that it is the conquest and maintenance of foreign territories which are and ought to be the sole aim and object of man; while the individual thinks that it is money-making which is the work of his life. And in the pursuit of something which they do not know, the Europeans have forgotten that they have a soul and a higher destiny. Unhappy Europe!

Europe is an armed camp. Thirty millions of its strongest men are trained like blood-hounds

to kill their fellow-beings. The greatest statesman is he who can outwit his neighbour by fraud. The greatest hero is he who can commit the greatest slaughter. The greatest man is he who has the largest income.

In India we have Europeans. See the lot of the British soldiers. Would any native of India like to go to a foreign country, in an uncongenial climate, under conditions under which European soldiers agree to live in India? We have, then, Europeans who administer the affairs of the country. They have absolute power and the prospect of a generous pension, and it is for these that they have sacrificed everyting that makes life tolerable or enjoyable. They toil and moil till their heart and health are broken, and they leave the country with a handsome pension (if they live till then) at a time when they can no longer enjoy its fruits, sighing over their days of past glory.

In India they are banished, far away from old and dear associations. The climate overpowers them; and in May and June, they are roasted every year under a scorching sun. They live without society, nay, even without the society of their wives and children: for the latter have to be sent home for the sake respectively of their health and education. Again, their life is one round of incessant toil and responsibility. Yes they have no time even to read.

Thus according to Lord Beaconsfield, Europe is a continent forsaken by God, for neither God nor His Son nor His Servant ever spoke to a European. Europe is, therefore, under the protection of the other, His enemy, who, though next to him in power and importance, is yet not a friend of man but his devourer.

THE LESSONS TO BE LEARNED FROM WILD DOGS.

THE other day, we were talking of dogs which hunt in packs. These dogs are to be found in the jungles of the Central Provinces and the Himalayas. In the latter place they are called *dholes* and are of a reddish colour. They are not big animals nor fierce in look, but yet it is said they are very fond of tigers' flesh. It is not known whether they have ever succeeded in hunting down elephants, but they have been seen in chasing buffaloes with success. The hungry wolves in Eastern and Central Europe attack their prey without method; and when the quarry is big and powerful some of them are killed. But there is so much method in the way the dogs alluded to above proceed in their business that even in their fights with tigers they manage to despatch their victims without a scratch on their bodies. This is because they are led by an irresistible master, a despot, who is followed implicitly.

The wild dogs are subjected to a severe coarse of training during their early age. A kind-hearted hunter suddenly found himself in possession of litter of wild dogs, seven in number, whose mother he had shot. He had to bring these helpless

creatures home. He sought suckling bitches and spent some money to procure them. But the bitches failed; the little ones emited such intolerable stench that no tame dog could bear it. He at last found a bitch to serve his purpose. When these young dogs grew up they began to fight among themselves,constantly without intermission. Why were they fighting? They were fighting to determine which was to be the leader? One by one, however, they gave up the struggle, and eventually the fight was continued between two only—brothers. Neither of them was willing to yield. When they fought they did not spare the opponent; indeed, they fought with great ferocity. Their bite was so severe that sometimes the master said that if he lifted one the other six would be found lifted with it. The fact is, their tenacity was such that they did not know to let go their hold.

As he said the two fought for mastery for a long time and at last one was vanquished and thus the victor became the leader of the seven. The six followed him implicitly and certainly there was no longer any quarrel among them. These dogs never barked and never attacked men, but they killed all the dogs in the neighbourhood. They, however, died one after the other of dysentery.

Let us now describe how they hunt in packs.

What they do is to pursue, say, a tiger, which never shews fight, if it encounters a pack of these dogs, and then to try to catch it by the ear. If one succeeds in jumping up and getting at one of the ears of the tiger, the latter is done for. The persistent enemy will hang by the ear and never let go its hold. The tiger may run ten miles, but the dog will yet be seen hanging by its ear. Of course, the victim makes every effort to extricate itself from its obstinate and implacable foe, but in vain.

When one ear of the tiger has been secured by a bold members of the pack, the other ear is soon after seized by another. So the tiger has now to run with two dogs hanging by its two ears. Others then get hold of its tail, and though these are dragged for miles they never relax their grip. Fancy the condition of the poor tiger. It is fleeing with two dogs hanging by its two ears and half a dozen sticking to its tail. Others then jump on its back. In this manner the tiger is never given an opportunity of using its claws or teeth, and is soon after hunted down.

Our Congress leaders should follow the methods of the wild dogs in hunting down their disabilities? The National Congress will be a success only when it has been able to develop a leader.

The patriots, who are opposed to Police rule as it prevails here, may also learn from the strate-

gy of these wild dogs, when hunting a quarry too strong for them, how to effect their purpose. If the pack find the tiger too strong for them they proceed in a more cautious way: in short, they try to starve it. Night and day they form a cordon round the unfortunate beast, and allow it no chance of obtaining food or rest, while every time the tiger essays to break through the cordon this is widened as the pack flees before it, only to be relentlessly narrowed again when the doomed animal is exhausted; till at last it is easily despatched.

In the same manner, the patriots, who are opposed to Police rule, can manage to starve the Police. To starve the Police is not to permit it to get its prey. If men, who run, at the slightest provocation, to the Police, knew their own interests and stayed at home to be cooled down, the Police would soon be starved to submission. So, what the patriots should do is to prevent people from going to the Police when they quarrel among themselves, but to persuade them to settle their differences by mutual forbearance.

The finest story of dogs hunting in packs and in a methodical way came from an Englishman, though in this case the pack consisted of only two hounds. Those who have seen an American black bear know that it is a terrible fellow, possessing vast strength and an unlimited amount of pluck. It

was his formidable animal that they fought. But let the Englishman relate his story:—

I was staying at a farm in Virginia, and I was soon introduced to the "pets" of the settlements. They were two boar-hounds named Romeo and Juliet, splendid specimens of their race. These gentle creatures could only be controllod by their keepers, so fierce and ungovernable were they.

One morning a Negro rushed into the house with the information that a bear had killed a calf and had escaped towards the mountains.

Instantly every body was on the alert, and messengers were sent to all the neighbours round about to give the news and direct them to the meeting place. By the time we have despatched a hasty breakfast the yard was full of men and dogs, but the "pets" were conspicuously absent. On enquiring for them, I was told not to worry about it that "they would be on hand when wanted."

The trail was clear and we pursued it hotly. In little more than half an hour the loud barking and snarling of the dogs told us that Bruin was at bay.

I was the first at the spot. At the foot of an oak sat a magnificent black bear, his open mouth and heaving chest denoting his excitement. About him were lying the bodies of eight dogs that he had killed; the rest of the pack had drawn off. They had had quite enough.

In five minutes more most of the hunters had come up and formed in a semicircle about the bear, which made no further effort to escape, but sat on his haunches, slowly swaying his body to and fro, and eyeing us intently.

Suddenly there was a cry of "Here they come!" and pushing their way through the thickets were seen the forms of the two great boar hounds. I had fully expected the dogs to spring upon their enemy as soon as they were unleashed, but to my surprise they remained quiet, uttering no sound and showing no excitement. They looked at each other, then

turning to the left and right, they walked some distance from each other. After this they quietly advanced towards Bruin and stood on either side of him about 20 feet away.

The dogs now flattened themselves to the earth and slowly drew their great bodies forward until within about 8 feet of their prey, when again rising to their full height, and trembling with suppressed excitement, they looked past the bear and upon each other. Again they crouched, but this time for a leap and in an instant they hurled themselves on their foe.

Brave old Bruin! He fought for exactly 3 minutes, and then died. It was not a sight I should care to witness again. A rifle-shot is speedier and more merciful.

We said above that it is not on record that an elephant was ever hunted down by wild dogs. But we had yet the pleasure of witnessing an elephant-and-dog fight. The elephant, however, was a tame one. and the dog an ordinary pariah which was called *Sada*. An elephant was passing by guided by its *mahoot*, when the master of the dog set it upon the huge animal. The dog at first could not believe that its master was serious in urging it to such a hazardous enterprise, but it felt to its dismay that there was no mistaking about the intention of its food giver. So girding up its loins, as it were, it attacked the elephant from behind. Now, the latter had never been followed by such an enemy n its life, and, therefore, not taking any notice of ts puny tormentor, was proceeding on its way in ts usual calm and sedate way. But the intention of *Sada* became quite clear. It not only barked

from behind but touched the hind legs of the elephant with its teeth. This impertinence from such a quarter was too much for the proud animal, and, in disgust, it actually turned round to meet its foe. And they stood face to face! *Sada's* strength lay in its legs, and that of the elephant in its trunk which it stretched out to catch hold of the enemy. But *Sada* was on guard and gave such a run with a defiant bark that the elephant realized the hopeless task of pursuing it, and thus retreated in good order. It was a sight to see the elephant trembling with rage when encountering the tiny foe, especially when the latter insulted it with bite and bark. *Sada* yet pursued the elephant for sometime, but the lätter had no help in the matter, and had to suffer the insult.

THE GREAT INVENTOR OF A NATION.

SRI KRISHNA is the God of Love. He is the Supreme Deity and does not interfere with the administration of mundane affairs of the universe. He leaves that task to some inferior deities. He first evolved Brahma out of Himself, and commanded him to create the material world. Brahma began the work in right earnest, and when he had proceeded so far as to create the animal kingdom, his two sons, Rup and Sanatan, prayed to their father to allow them the privilege of helping him in the business, and Brahma agreed. As soon as the two brothers had created some animals, Brahma wanted to see the result of their labours, whereupon they first brought forward the elephant before him for inspection.

Brahma could not help smiling at the sight of this huge mass of flesh. "What is this trunk for?" he enquired. The sons replied, that they had created the animal in haste, and afterwards discovered that the neck of the animal had been made so stiff and short as to incapacitate it from putting its food in its mouth; they had, therefore, given it a trunk to enable it to do so. Brahma said: "My children, this is the result of hasty work.

Before you had constructed his body, you should have thought how he was to secure his food and preserve his life."

The giraffe was brought in next. Its four legs of unequal length made Brahma smile again: "How did this happen my children?" he asked. They gave him the same reply: "This too is the result of haste, father. We first constructed its two hind legs, but came to find that if we made its two front legs but of the same length, the animal would not be able to reach the branches, the leaves of which are to nourish it, and keep it alive." "My children," said Brahma, "you should have thought of this when you took up the construction of the hind legs."

The kangaroo, when exhibited, created equal surprise. The children explained that they had made the front legs of the giraffe longer than the hind ones. To make up for this defect, they had made the hind legs of the kangaroo longer than the front ones. "We have only sought harmony and equilibrium," said Rup and Sanatan.

The sight of the ass, with its two long ears made Brahma laugh out-right. Said the god to his sons: "You would, I see, make me an object of laughter to the world." The explanation of the children was that it was the result of the joint efforts of the two brothers—that one had made the body, the other the head, and when the latter was

stuck to the former it was found to have bee made too ridiculous!

It was, in this manner, the camel, the monke etc., were brought before Brahma and criticize by him. He said: "Before creating the animal you ought to have carefully thought whether the parts would harmoniously agree with each other, and suit the whole." In order to humour his children Brahma had to accept what they had done, and hence we have these unseemly and laughter-producing animals noted above. We are informed that the duck-billed quadruped of Australia is one of the creations of the children of Brahma.

Brahma had not then created man, but he had already concieved the idea. He told his sons that they had made their creations clumsy and ugly. As, for instance, they had no reason to give the animals four legs. Saying this the god shewed them the sketch of a man as he had conceived him. "You see", said Brahma, "he will have only two legs."

Rup and Sanatan.—"But the elephant is very heavy, while your man is very light."

Brahma.—"Why have you given four legs to the mouse which is lighter than man? You have, besides, made the ostrich, which is heavier than man, a two-legged creature and one of the fleetest creatures on earth?

"The fact is, father," said they, "we found it very irksome to form a full conception of the whole in the beginning. We began with the parts. When we found the body of the elephant too heavy, we had to give it thick, column-like legs; when two legs were found not sufficient we gave four; we should have given five if necessary. In the same manner, we gave it a trunk when we found that otherwise it would die of hunger."

Lord Curzon, the supreme ruler of India, loves the Indians, as every one knows. He has left the administration of the country to his subordinates. One of his subordinates, Mr Risley, wanted permission to evolve a new country with a new nation, and obtained it.

The country was easily evolved. He kept a map before him; he had compasses and pencils, and the country was marked out. He then followed exactly the way Rup and Sanatan had adopted to do their work. The cost of the administration was too heavy for Assam alone, and hence he would add Chittagong, Dacca and Mymensing to it. Rup and Sanatan might have reduced the bulk of the elephant as. Mr. Risley might have lightened the cost of the administration so as to make Assam bear it easily. Thus, if the brothers had given two more legs to the elephant, Mr. Risley added the two districts of Dacca and

Mymensing to Assam, besides the three districts of the Chittagong Division.

In the same manner, if the brothers made the kangaroo as it is, to remove the defect they made the giraffe. Mr. Risley also amalgamated the Bengalee-speaking peoples with those who speak the Assamese, and fastened two Uriyaspeaking districts of other provinces upon Orissa, in order to secure equilibrium. Besides, did not the brothers bring forth the creature which was a quadruped but had the bill of a duck? Under the same principle, Mr. Risley thought he was justified in fastening a Bengalee-speaking people upon an Assamese-speaking province. The brothers created the parts first without taking into consideration whether, when stuck together, they would look hideous or beautiful. Similarly Mr. Risley conceived the parts first, without considering whether, when put together, they would form a harmonious or an incongruous whole.

As for evolving a new nation, Mr. Risley has yet something more to do. The people of Assam have a distinct trace of the flat nose of the Mongolian race. The nose of the Bengalee is of a Caucasian type. For the purposes of harmony, Mr. Risley will have to flatten it a little; or, if he chooses, he can correct the nasal defect of the Assamese. Here parenthetically we can suggest a way how this can be done. Let the noses of the

Assamese be held by pincers firmly, and in this manner they can be lengthened. If the Assamese make wry faces under the process, he can console them with the remark that his great idea necessitated it.

Then there is the language difficulty. Mr Risley will have to create a language which will suit both the Assamese and the Bengalees. We could here make some suggestions, but as Mr. Risley possibly does not know the Assamese, we think it would be difficult for us to be intelligible to him.

PELTING OF STONES BY—GHOSTS.

POPULAR notion in India is that ghosts pelt stones and I had an ocular demonstration of the fact. It was in the month of December, eight years ago, that I witnessed a scene which proved that there are many things in earth and heaven that are not dreamt of in our philosophy. I was in the town of Deoghur in my own house situated in an open place. Close to my house was that of one Gonori Mahato which also was situated in an open place. It came to my notice that ghosts had appeared in his house. Shortly after I had heard this, I saw Gonori himself. I asked him about the ghost and he said, "Yes, sir, it is a 'pichash'" which means a ghost of very low degree. I was a little surprised to hear this from him. For Gonori had become a Christian, and was not likely to put faith in the existence of ghosts, lower or higher. I asked him what the ghost was doing in his house, but he was not communicative and went his way. I forgot all about it, when a strange incident brought the pranks of this ghost again to my notice. Gonori, being a milk-man, supplied me with milk, and an Ooria servant of mine went to fetch it. He was brought back almost in an unconscious state by a friend of Gonori just before evening. I asked

Shiva, the servant, to explain the reason of the sorrowful plight: He said, after great effort, for he could scarcely utter a word, that hearing that ghosts were playing mad pranks in the house of Gonori he had gone to fetch milk a little before the usual time he used to bring it, that is, before the sun had gone down. Evening was just setting in, and he was coming with the milk when, no sooner had he left Gonori's house, than a black and hideous "thing" pounced upon him and inflicted a blow upon his breast, so that he fell senseless with a groan. Gonori had invited a few friends to his house to pass the night with him to protect him from the "pichash," and thus, when they heard his groan, they came to his rescue and brought him home.

On the following morning, I went to Gonori's house, which was about two minutes' walk from mine, accompanied by two friends, both of them highly educated and intensely intellectual. His house, as I said before, was situated in an open space only on one side of which there was a cluster of bamboo trees where the ghost might conceal himself, but even this would be impossible in day time if he was a fraud. On entering the house we found a girl of about twelve sweeping the yard with a broom-stick, the yard being surrounded with huts and walls. The other inmates of the house, Gonori himself, his mother about

seventy, his wife about forty-five, were all absent. Seeing that the girl was the only inmate of the house doing household work, we went outside chatting at random, nearly forgetting all about the ghost. My friends were a few yards from me talking together, and I took this opportunity of addressing the ghost in these words: "Sir Ghost, if you are here, please shew yourself to us, for we are highly respectable gentlemen and you should behave properly with us." No sooner had I said this than a clod of earth came rolling down the slope of the hut near which I was standing! This amused me greatly, for I could not believe that it was actually a ghost that had responded to my call. So I asked my friends to note the politeness of the ghost which had actually listened to my request. They had heard the sound of the fall of the clod, but had not seen it coming down. So they came close to me to examine the clod. I again addressed the ghost, I said: "Sir Ghost, this is highly improper, you should be impartial in the treatment of your guests. You have satisfied me but not my friends. Please shew yourself to them also." No sooner had I said this, than there rolled down another clod, and this time we all three saw it. Let me confess, this time we were all surprised. But was that girl doing it? No, we could see from our position that she was busy doing her work of sweeping.

I again addressed the ghost, "Sir Ghost, remove all our doubts and do favour us again." No sooner said than done. Another clod of earth came down rolling, following the other two. We were petrified with astonishment. It was about 9 in the morning, the sun was up in the skies, and there was not a speck of cloud. And we three saw this before our eyes in an open field where there were none besides the girl who was sweeping the yard. But no time was allowed us by the good ghost to speculate upon what we had witnessed, for the merry thing now began to roll down stones of its own accord, one after another, in rapid succession. Then clods and stones began to fall in the yard which the girl was sweeping. We ran there, and then commenced as it were a perfect rain of stones, pieces of burnt brick and clods of earth. Where did they come from? From the skies? Perhaps, Perhaps not; for, some of them struck the mud-walls of the huts horizontally. Of course, we were afraid of being struck by these missiles but luckily we escaped unhurt, but some were hurt subsequently though slightly. For, the fact of this strange occurrence had gone abroad, and people were running to the house from all sides, even from the town, which was about half-a-mile distant from the place. The house was thus filled by hundreds of men in a short time.

As I said, it was broad daylight and though

there were hundreds present, none could tell whence the stones came. The inmates of the house had come back and they were kept in one place huddled together so that they might play no tricks. But the scene that presented itself (it was literally hailing stones) convinced every one that there could be no trick at the bottom. The yard was soon filled with these clods, stones, &c., and they became almost knee-deep in a short time.

But the most wonderful feats, performed by the ghost, yet remain to be told. A big piece of stone, weighing over a hundred pounds (more than a maund)—which it would be difficult for one strong man to carry, was brought out from the bottom of the well which stood on one side of the yard and thrown in the yard. A little before this we had heard a splashing of water in the wéll, and the big stone was brought out and made to fall in the yard with a thud. This so terrified the sight-seers, that while some fled others took shelter in the huts.

I had a notion that the girl was a medium and it was through her that the ghost was playing his pranks. This notion I gathered by observing one fact. It was this. The clods fell most where the girl stood. So, I led her and Gonori's wife to the Eastern side of the house in a field where mustard had been grown, but gathered. It was an open field, filled with clods of earth among which, no

doubt the ghost had found some of his missiles. I made the girl and the woman sit in the field. There they sat, and wonder of wonders, the clods round them began, as it were, to dance! Thus a clod would rise, say, four or five feet from the earth and fall down. At times more than one clod would thus rise up and fall down. Here then we had the scene of clods of earth in the midst of the field dancing, as if they were imbued with life, and this at about eleven in the day and in the presence of hundreds. It seemed to me that in the field the ghost had not power enough to be able to throw the clods to any distance.

The intellectual critic, after he has read so far, might exclaim, *cui bono?* "What do you prove by the incident?" Well we have not done yet, we have yet to record more wonderful doings of this ghost. Indeed, I succeeded eventually in making it talk to me in its ghostly way, but of this in our next. Yet does not the incident, so far as described above, prove anything? Does it not prove that there are more things in earth and heaven than are ever dreamt of in our philosophy, and that the scientists have yet much to learn? It proves that a thing which has no material body can pelt stones and can also possess gleams of reason. Did not the thing, by listening to our request in the beginning, shew that it could hear and understand us? Does not the incident of bringing the

big stone from the bottom of the well prove that it had method in its mad pranks? So the incident, so far as has been described, proves that there is no impossibility in a man losing his body yet retaining his physical powers and reasoning faculties. But wait till you have heard the end.

IN the midst of this scene, the thought troubled me that it was my duty to make the most of the occasion, for such experiences do not fall to the lot of every man. But I was be-wildered, I could not think of a plan how to utilise the occasion, or how to experiment with the ghost who was playing the mad pranks. He was no doubt, we thought, one of a low degree, that is, an earth-bound and gross soul. Was he dense enough to be visible to the naked eye? I tried and tried again to see him but I could see nothing. I then came to the conclusion that I must take time to think over the matter and should commence my experiments on the next day. Yet I could not leave the spot—I was so enthralled that I had to wait to see the end.

Suddenly a thought struck me that I might as well take the girl to a closed room, and see what the result would be. So I took her and Gonori's wife to a room, which had walls on all sides but no windows whatever and only a small door to enter by. We sat all three together and kept the door open. Those who still remained—it was then

about 2 p. m. and most having left the place—stood outside, bewildered. For five hours the ghost had been pelting stones, and when I took the woman and the girl in, I saw that its power had got a little weakened.

Well, we three sat, facing one another. There was almost as clear a light in the room as there was outside. I then addressed the ghost, and requested him that now was the time for him to shew wonders. Saying this we remained quiet. Of course, our people know what a *shika* is—it is a contrivance made of jute, like a sling to hang pots and cups on. A *shika* was hanging behind me, on which was placed a cup made of *sal* leaves, containing a small quantity of a sort of coarse pulse grown in those parts, called Kurthi. I heard a rustling sound behind me, and on turning my eyes I saw that the leaf cup, was trying, as it were, to leave its place. After some slight efforts it succeeded in raising itself and pouring its contents (the Kurthi) upon my "devoted" head. Of course, I was amused a little at this prank though I was also frightened a bit. So the ghost was a wag. I told him "You have soiled my head." But the ghost, of course, could not speak, and so I got no answer. A minute or so later, I heard a noise proceeding again from the same spot. This time I saw it was a wooden bowl which produced it. The bowl, which had also been put on the *shika*,

shewed signs of life, and it seemed that it was also trying to come out of its place of confinement. After some efforts it succeeded in realeasing itself and coming towards me. And the bowl now poured its contents upon my head!

All this while the girl and the woman were sitting before me in broad daylight. And what did this bowl contain? It was salt! So Mr. Ghost poured all the salt that the bowl contained upon my head!

This 'was joke number two' And we all three laughed. "Can you speak, even in whispers?"— I asked the ghost. No answer. There was a bamboo stick—*a lathi*, in short, a bamboo club about 5 ft. in length—in the room, leaning against a corner. This was the third object which was seen to shew signs of life. It trembled a little, as if some one was shaking it; then it stood erect. Next it began to move and approach me by short jumps as some birds would do, when hopping! And then it seemed to me as if somebody had grasped it with both hands and was, in that manner, carrying it towards me; then it struck the earth with great force. My head escaped by few inches only! If the club had fallen upon my head, it would have received a serious hurt. It seemed to me that the ghost was giving me a hint to depart and thus escape worse treatment. I had, indeed, to put an end to my experiment imme-

diately, and come out. It was then about half past two the ghost had begun its manifestations a little before 9 a. m. I came home exhausted in body and mind, though with a deep determination to continue the experiments the following day. On the following morning, I went to the place and found that the girl had fled with her husband. They were Gonori's relations, and were staying with him as guests. They were told by some mischievous people, that the police would punish them; and this frightened them so much that they fled. I searched for them and at last found their whereabout,but could not induce them—rather the husband—to come back.

We thus witnessed what may be called an occult phenomenon. We saw it along with many hundred others in broad daylight. Any tricks, under the circumstances, would be impossible. Now the reader is left to draw his own conclusions.

We saw an invisible thing giving proofs that it possessed enormous physical powers; that it had consciousness, nay, that it understood a joke. Was it the soul of a dead man that was acting in that way? Of course, the evidence is not conclusive that it was a dead man who was doing it. For to prove this conclusively the "thing" ought to have declared that it had been a man before, and then proved his identity by other unimpeach-

able evidence. But yet the incident carries with-it a moral conviction which is irresistible, that it was done by a man who had lived on this earth before.

THE AGRICULTURAL SCHOLARSHIPS.

[IN THREE ACTS.]

ACT I.

(*The Secretary of State receiving a deputation from Manchester Merchants.*)

Deputation.—The true interests of India are thus neglected. It is the duty of the Government of India to make India rich and contented.

Secretary of State.—We are always very glad to receive practical suggestions from you.

Deputation.—We are all practical men, my Lord. We shall prove to your lordship how the resources of India have been frittered away. First, then, India is an agricultural country. Do you admit that, my Lord?

Secretary.—Certainly.

Deputation.—Your lordship will also admit that cotton is indigenous in India.

Secretary.—Yes, there cannot be any manner of doubt in that.

Deputation.—That being so, is it not clear that India should grow cotton, only cotton, and nothing but cotton?

Secretary.—I am all attention.

Deputation.—Our second proposition is that,

England is a manufacturing country. Can there be any doubt, therefore, that India should grow cotton and England should weave? Is not this a providential arrangement?

Secretary.—I am hearing you with absorbing interest.

Deputation.—A fish must not run, nor a dog fly; Nature does not permit it. You must not, therefore, permit India to weave. India has a destiny of its own—a great destiny. We have conquered India for benevolent purposes. We must, therefore, grant her the inestimable privilege of growing as much cotton as we want. We must also grant her the additional privilege of purchasing the clothes manufactured in our mills. How is it that our manufactures are not more largely consumed in that country!

Secretary.—The men there are poor.

Deputation.—So you must first of all make them rich by developing the resources of the country. A thorough agricultural education must be given. India should grow cotton, only cotton, and nothing but cotton, and that will make India rich.

Secretary.—You forget the second part on your proposition, that India should use cotton manufactured by you only, use nothing but cotton, and use more cotton.

Deputation.—Just so.

Secretary.—We shall issue instructions to India and we hope they will prove satisfactory to you.

ACT II.

(Present two Indian rulers.)

Ruler 1st.—We must do something to please Manchester, at least so we are ordered to do.

Ruler 2nd.—It is not a hard task, for with all their wisdom, nothing is easier than to be fool them.

Ruler 1st.—But the difficulty is to please them without creating a howl here in India.

Ruler 2nd.—That can be done easily enough. We can spend a few thousands upon some agricultural scholarships. It will help nobody; but it will cost little, please Manchester and enlightened native public opinion in India.

Ruler 1st.—What do you mean by enlightened native public opinion?

Ruler 2nd.—The leading men in chief cities, who have never seen a blade of grass in their lives.

Ruler 2nd.—Let it be done then.

ACT III.

(An England-returned Agricultural Professor and his pupils.)

Pupil 1st.—Sir, is it time that we should sow paddy?

Professor.—Don't ask me that, you can inquire about it of a common cultivator. That is not a

scientific question. I did not go to England, interview Mr. Gladstone, and study chemistry to be pestered with such petty matters. Bring soils and I shall analyse them for you.

Pupil 2nd.—I gave some the other day, for the purpose of analysis.

Professor.—Yes, I found in them silica, allumina, vegetable and animal matter. Ask the cultivators of the country to come to me with specimens of soil, and I shall analyse them,—for a reasonable consideration.

Pupil 2.—What will they gain by your analysis, Sir?

Professor.—That, is again, a foolish question. They will gain knowledge. What is more valuable than knowledge itself?

Pupil 2.—You have analysed the soils that I brought; what are they fit for?

Professor.—Well, I have thrown them away after analysis.

Pupil 2.—I don't mean that. You have analysed the soil. What crops will grow best in them?

Professor.—That, of course, you must learn by experiments. First, you sow the lands with, say, paddy. If paddy fails, sow wheat. If it fails, sow sugar-cane. And in this manner within the course of twenty to twenty-five years you shall be able to know, of course, if you conduct your,

experiments with care, what your lands are fit for.

P. 3.—Sir, we have come here to learn. Some of us would like to learn how to cure tobacco, some to learn how to grow long-stapled cotton, and good tea. Some are for improving jute, and some sugar-cane. There are others who are for the improvement of silk, and some are for tussar, lac and rhea.

P. 4.—My ambition does not go so far. I would like to learn how to make my lands yield more paddy, wheat pulses, etc., than it does now.

Prof.—Well, you mention crops which I have never seen in England, and some of them I have never heard of in my life. Neither the savants in England, nor men like Bright and Gladstone could give me any hint as to the existence of the crops you mention. I cannot call, therefore, all these crops respectable. If you want to learn from me how to grow any respectable crop, I can teach you how to grow scotch beans and oats. I saw them grown in Scotland.

P. 4.—Will you then let us know what you will teach us, besides the process by which soils are analysed?

Prof.—Well, if you want to know how to grow jute, and such other things, you can go and ask a common cultivator. But I shall teach you the curious process how the plant draws its moisture from the soil, and how the sap is beautifully

carried through meandering veins. I shall explain to you how the leaves and flowers get their colour. I shall—

P. 5.—(*Suddenly appearing*).–The new plough that you gave me does not work.

Prof.—What, that splendid plough constructed on scientific principles designed after the model of the latest inventions in America!

P. 5—They are too heavy for the cattle to drag.

Prof.—Is that all? Then indent for a pair of bullocks from Ayrshire or Kentucky, and the plough will work beautifully.

P. 6.—My father, Sir, has asked me to return you the harrowing machine. He says that he prefers his 4-anna harrow to yours which, you say, is worth Rs. 25. The 4-anna implement works less effectually, but then it costs only 4 annas. We cannot afford to pay Rs 25 for a harrow.

P. 7.—Talking of implements, Sir the winnowing machine is broken.

Prof.—Then have it repaired.

P. 7.—They cannot repair it here.

Prof.—Well, then, in that case you must send it to England.

P. 7.—My father says very hard things of you.

Prof.—What does he say?

P. 7.—He says that you are a—humbug.

Prof.—(*Solus*) I feel that I have yet something more to learn. I am extremely doubtful whether my pupils will stick to me to learn only vegetable physiology, and the analysis of soils.

THE DETERIORATION OF THE INDIANS.

ONE of the most painful and absorbing topics of conversation, amongst the Indians, is the physical deterioration of the races in this country. The following startling telegram came from Madras some years ago:

MADRAS, *March 21.*

'The Hon'ble Genston, presiding at the annual meeting of the Physical Training Association, alluded to the startling fact that, out of 22 native candidates for Entrance to the Civil Service recently, 70 per cent, were rejected as physically unfit.'

Thus 70 per cent. are unfit for civil employ; how many more must be unfit for military employ? It is a fact that the races are deteriorating all along the line. The Government has been obliged to admit this fact partially. It is now freely admitted that fighting materials are disappearing fast from the land. Said the *Pioneer* some years ago:—

'The long reign of internal peace has directly affected the character of the population; the traditions of military supremacy among the Shikhs are dying out; the Punjabi Mohamedans are more

intent on the cultivating of their lands, secure in the possession of such property as they can accumulate; while the once restless, Pathan tribes within the border are not allowed to follow the example thus set them.

The same paper continued: "Officers of long experience in Punjab have noticed the change with regret, for they cannot now choose and pick their men." And then it is very properly argued that if this be the case with people, "who were at the height of military strength, fifty years ago, how much more must be with others whose powers were broken long before!" It comes to this that in the whole of India, in a population of 250 millions, it has been found difficult to find men who are capable of fighting. Is this not a serious matter, both for the people and the Government? Does not this mean the practical emasculation of the vast majority of entire nation?

That the people are now utterly helpless, is a patent fact to all A dacoit, with half-a-dozen following, may commit depredations for years together, and the people will find themselves unable to defend their homes and persons. A tiger makes the inhabitants desert their villages, and a leopard will compel them to go in-doors every evening, before the sun sets. Nay the Indian newspapers contain appeals to Government and

to English sportsmen to protect the people from mad dogs and jackals.

But only less than a hundred years ago, the people of India were as strong as any other race in the world. It is said that the Bengalees were the weakest race in India, and the Punjabees the strongest, except the Gurkhas. But that is not it. The Bengalees were as strong as any in India; only being secure from external invasion which the Punjabee was not, the inhabitants of Bengal had not been able to develop their material instincts to the same extent as the border tribes had.

Only forty years ago we have seen plenty of fighting materials in Bengal, twenty-five in a hundred; but it is now impossible to find half-a-dozen in a million!

The Bengalees have proved themselves to be an intellectual race and in this intellectual progress they are indebted vastly to British rule. Intellectual they had always been even before the British came. But then, in pre-British days, learning was confined almost to the Brahmins, and the other castes had no opportunity of improving themselves to the utmost of their capacity. But under British Rule, the Bengalees have now obtained this privilege; and if the Brahmins yet continue to hold the first place, they have found formidable competitors in other castes,

such as Kayesthas and Vaidyas. This intellectual superiority of the Bengalees has created for them enemies amongst Europeans who call them cowardly, effeminate, and so forth.

We shall now show that even the Bengalees were a powerful race only less than a hundred years ago.

The Mussalman invaders and conquerors of India found it to their advantage to leave the administration in the hands of Hindus. In Bengal, the country was divided and put into the charge of Zemindars who were sovereign Princes. And thus, at one time, Bengal was under twelve such Zemindars.

The Moghul Sovereign exacted military service from these Zemindars. Thus says the *Ayeen Akbary* :—

"The soubah of Bengal consists of 24 Sircars and 487 mahals. The revenue is 14,961,482 Sicca rupees, and the zemindars (who are mostly Kayesthas) furnish 23,330 cavalry, 801,158 infantry, 170 elephants 4,260 cannons and 4,400 boats."

Thus the Moghul Emperors could raise lakhs of men from Bengal to fight for them, but the present rulers have not one single Bengalee soldier!

The Mussalman rule, being barbarous and oppressive, did not meet with the approval of the country; and Protap and Shankar, two Bengalee

youths, formed the plan of expelling the Mahomedans from India. Protap was the son of a wealthy Zemindar, residing in the Sunderbans near Takee; and Shankar was a Brahmin youth, his friend. They both proceeded to Delhi to study the Moghul army and their mode of warfare. They found that the superiorty of the Moghuls lay in their artillery.

The Feringhees (Portuguese) also infested India, and they were invincible because of their fleet and cannons. Protap enlisted the services of a Portuguese General, who is called Ruda in Sanskrit books and Bengalee legends. Batteries of artillery and a fleet were thus constructed in the Sunderbans. Protap then declared his independence.

Now it was a most foolhardy thing for Protap to do it, for the Moghuls then were in the heyday of their glory. He declared his independence while yet the great Akbar ruled!

In the beginning, Protap and Shankar carried on a guerilla warfare. They offered no direct resistance to the Moghuls but fled before them, only to expel them, when the rainy season had set in.

But gradually Protap became bolder. He took Gaur, the then capital city of Bengal, and became the absolute master of Bengal and Behar. Then he gave up guerilla warfare altogether, and

began to wage pitched battles with the Moghuls. And in every one of them, he defeated and sometimes exterminated the invaders of his country. This is what we find in the proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for December 1868 with regard to the brave doings of Protap:—

"The first general sent was Abram Khan whose army was nearly annihilated near the fort Mutlar (Mutlah, now Port Canning). Twenty-five other generals are stated to have been defeated in succession."

Now mind, these were not skirmishes but regular battles, between huge armies, made up of infantry, artillery and cavalry.

Protap's commanders were mostly Bengalees, and some of them have their descendants, but they are now scarcely over five feet in height and are doing the business of either village schoolmasters or clerks.

Short accounts of their battles are found in Sanskrit History. There, we read that, in a battle the Moghul General, Azim, with twenty thousand of his men, was killed. In another battle, ten thousand men of the Moghuls were destroyed. These details will give one an idea of the severe nature of the battles fought. *

Of the twelve Zemindars, referred to above

* See Satya Charan Shastri's "Life of Protapaditya." The author is a descendant of the great Shankara himself.

who ruled Bengal, one had his capital city in Bishnupore, now in the district of Bancoora. In going there, one can see even now traces of extensive fortifications and a huge cannon, perhaps the biggest in the world. This country was visited by a French traveller, and this is what he says of what he saw :

" This fortunate spot, which extends about a hundred and sixty miles, is called Bissenpoore. It has been governed time immemorial by a Bramin family of the tribe of Rajahputs. Here the purity and equal of the ancient political system of the Indians is found unadulterated. This singular Government, the first and most striking monument in the world has, till now been beheld with too much indifference. We have no remains of ancient nations but brass and marble, which speak only to imagination and conjecture, those uncertain interpreters of manners and customs that no longer exist. Were a philosopher transported to Bissenpore, he would immediately be a witness of the life led by the first inhabitants of India many thousand years ago ; he would converse with them he would trace the progress of this nation, celebrated, as it were, from its very infancy ; he would see the rise of a Government, which being founded in happy prejudices, in a simplicity and purity of manners, in the mild temper of the people and the integrity of the chieftains, has survived

those innumerable systems of legislation, which have made only a transitory appearance upon the stage of the world with the generations they were destined to torment. More solid and durable than those political structures, which, raised by imposture and enthusiasm, are the scourge of human kind, and are doomed, to perish with the foolish opinions that gave them birth, the Government of Bissenpore, the offspring off a just attention to order and the laws of nature, has been established and maintained upon unchangeable principles, and has undergone no more alteration than those principles themselves. The singular situation of this country has preserved to the inhabitants their primitive happiness and the gentleness of their character, by securing them from the danger of being conquered, or imbruing their hands in the blood of their fellow-creatures. Nature has surrounded them with water; and they need only open the sluices of their rivers to overflow the whole country. The armies sent to subdue them have so frequently been drowned that the plan of enslaving them has been laid aside; and the projectors of it have thought proper to content themselves with an appearance of submission.

Liberty and property are sacred in Bissenpore Robbery, either public or private, is never heard of. As soon as any stranger enters the territory he

comes under the protection of the laws, which provide for his security. He is furnished with guides at free cost, who conduct him from place to place, and are answerable for his person and effects. When he changes his conductors, the new ones deliver to those they relieve an attestation of their conduct, which is registered and afterwards sent to the Raja. All the time he remains in the country he is maintained and conveyed with his merchandise, at the expense of the State, unless he desires leave to stay longer than three days in the same place. In that case he is obliged to defray his own expenses, unless he is detained by any disorder, or other unavoidable accident. This beneficence to strangers is the consequence of the warmth with which the citizens enter into each others' interests. They are so far from being guilty of an injury to each other, that whoever finds a purse or other thing of value, hangs it upon the first tree he meets with, and informs the nearest guard, who gives notice of it to the public by beat of drum. These maxims of probity are so generally received, that they direct even the operations of Government. Out of between seven and eight millions (about 430,000*l.* on an average) it annually receives, without injury to agriculture or trade, what is not wanted to supply the unavoidable expenses of the State, is laid out in improvements The Raja is enabled to engage in these humane

employments, as he pays the Moguls only what tribute, and at what times, he thinks proper.*

But a still greater authority, Mr. Holwell, who was governor of Calcutta, speaks in the same way of Bishnupore in his "Interesting Historical Events," which was printed in 1765:—

"To the west of Burdwan, something northerly lie the lands belonging to the family of Raja Gopal Singh, of the Rajpoot Bramin tribe; they posses an extent of sixteen days' travel, this district produces an annual revenue of between thirty and forty lacs; but from the happiness of his situation he is perhaps the most independent Raja of Indostan, having it always in his power to overflow his country, and drown any enemy that comes against him; as happened at the beginning of Sujah Khan's Government, who sent a strong body of horse to reduce him, these he suffered to advance far into his country, then opening the dams of the rivers destroyed them to a man; this action deterred any subsequent attempts to reduce him; but if the frontiers of the district were so invested, as to prevent the exit of the merchandise of his country, which might easily be done, he would be presently brought to obedience, and glad to compound for a tribute of twenty lacs per annum; as it is, he can hardly be said to acknowledge

*Abbe Raynal on East and West Indies. Translated from the French by J. Justamond, M. A.—1777, Vol. I., pp. 405 to 406.

any allegiance to the Moghul or Sabah, he some years deigns to send to the Subah an acknowledgment by way of salaamy (or present) of 15,000 rupees, sometimes 20,000, and some years not anything at all, as he happens to be disposed.

But in truth, it would be almost cruelty to molest these happy people, for in this district, are the only vestiges of the beauty, purity, piety, regularity, equity and strictness of the ancient Indostan Government. Here the property as well as the liberty of the people are inviolate, here no robberies are heard of, either private or public; the traveller, either with, or without merchandise, on his entering this district, becomes the immediate care of Government which allots him guards without any expense, to conduct him from stage to stage, and these are accountable for the safety and accommodation of his person and effects. At the end of the first stage he is delivered over with certain benevolent formalities to the guards of the next, who after interrogating the traveller, as to the usage he had received in his journey, dismisses the first guard with a written certificate of their behaviour, and a receipt for the traveller and his effects, which certificate and receipt are returnable to the commanding officer of the first stage, who registers the same, and regularly reports it to the Rajah.

In this form the traveller is passed through

the country, and if he only passes, he is not suffered to be at any expense for food, accommodation, or carriage for his merchandise or baggage; but it is otherwise, if he is permitted to make any residence in one place above three days, unless occasioned by sickness, or any unavoidable accident. If any, thing is lost in this district, for instance, a bag of money or other valuable, the person who finds it hangs it upon the next tree, and gives notice to the nearest chowkey or place of guard, the officer of which orders immediate publication of the same by beat of tomtom or drum.

There are in this precinct, no less than three hundred and sixty considerable Pagodas, or place of public worship, errected by this Raja, and his ancestors. The worship, of the cow is here carried to so great an extreme, that, if that animal meets with a violent death, the city or village to which it belonged, go to a general mourning and fast, for three days, and are obliged from the Rajah to the meanest of the people, to remain on the spot, where they first heard the publication of the accident; and are employed during that space in performing various expiations as directed in the Shastra; but more of this under a subsequent general head.

Bishunpore, the capital, and chief residence of the Rajah, and which gives a name to the whole district, is also the chief seat of trade; the produce

of the country consists of Sal timbers (a wood equal in quality to the best of our oak), dammer laccas, an inferior sortment of raw silk, and coposs, and grain sufficient only for their consumption; it is from this district that the East India companies are chiefly supplied with the article of shell lacco.—Pages 197 to 200, Part I."

When the English came here, they found the country inhabited by a strong race. So they enlisted Bengalees as soldiers and put them under Bengalee officers. With this army of Bengalees and with a sprinkling of British soldiers, the British conquered Bengal and Behar. They then enlisted the Beharees and conquered the North-West. They next availed of the Pandays of the North-West and conquered the Punjab. The Punjabees were enlisted and Afghanistan was invaded. It was thus India was conquered for England by the Indians themselves and originally with the help of the Bengalees. Mr. Holwell says, "It would be almost cruelty to molest these happy people." We are further told that Bishnupore gives evidence of "the beauty, piety, regularity, and equity of ancient India." All have been destroyed, of course, with the best of motives, by the present rulers in their zeal for reform.

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